

U.S. helicopter crashes; 6 killed

BAHRAIN (AP) — A U.S. Navy Sea Dragon helicopter crashed in the Gulf Saturday night and all six men aboard were killed, a U.S. navy spokesman said Monday. The crash was one of the worst accidents U.S. forces have suffered in the Gulf since the war against Iraq ended in February. It raised the number of American non-combat deaths in the region since then to 71, according to U.S. military officials. The men's bodies were recovered from the Gulf about 40 hours later. The accident occurred at 9:05 p.m. (1805 GMT) Saturday minutes after the MH-53E helicopter took off from the amphibious assault ship USS Pelelieu 65 kilometers north of Bahrain. "It was taking off from the ship, and it crashed shortly thereafter," a spokesman told the Associated Press. "We're just recovering the six bodies." The crash is being investigated, but so far it is not known what caused it, he said. The MH-53E, the largest helicopter in the U.S. naval air service, is mainly used for towing mine-sweeping detectors. But it is also employed as a transport. The MH-53E usually carries a four-man crew. It was not known why six men were aboard.

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Israel triples settlement investments

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel has tripled its industrial investment in Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip to \$50 million this year, the Peace Now movement said Monday. The statement was released as U.S. Secretary of State James Baker arrived in Israel for talks with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and a Palestinian delegation on a planned Middle East peace conference. The Peace Now report said that Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's government has not only tripled its construction of houses in settlements, but it also attempts to lure Israeli and foreign investors to construct industrial enterprises in the settlements at an unprecedented pace. The group said its report reflected investments under the ministry of industry and trade. The \$2 enterprises approved for construction or expansion in the West Bank were offered U.S. grants, tax reductions and state guarantees at a faster pace than similar businesses inside Israel, the report said.

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Judge dismisses case against North

WASHINGTON (R) — A federal judge Monday granted a request by the Iran-contra special prosecutor and dropped all criminal charges against fired White House aide Oliver North, the mastermind of the covert operation that rocked Ronald Reagan's presidency. "This terminates the case," Judge Gerhard Gesell said after Iran-contra prosecutor Lawrence Walsh admitted that he would be unable to salvage Col. North's criminal conviction for his role in the scandal. Col. North was convicted in 1989 for his role in the covert scheme to sell weapons to Iran in 1985-86 and to divert millions of dollars in profits to the Nicaraguan contra rebels, despite a congressional ban on military assistance.

Qatar denies buying S. African weapons

NICOSIA (R) — Qatar, locked in a territorial dispute with neighboring Bahrain, Monday denied reports it had ordered long-range guns from South Africa. Gulf-based military sources reported Wednesday that Qatar had ordered from South African arms manufacturer Armscor a dozen 155-mm G-5 howitzers, which have a range of 38 kilometers. The London-based specialist magazine Jane's Defence Weekly recently published a similar report. Bahrain's Sheikh Isa bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, ruler of the island in the southern part of the island, would be just within range of G-5's set up on the Qatari peninsula across a narrow strip of water, the sources told Reuters. "An official Qatari source has denied a recent Reuters report that Qatar was seeking military equipment from South Africa," the official Qatari news agency (QNA) said. "The state of Qatar knows well the purpose of reporting that news and who is spreading it and stands behind it at this time," the source told QNA.

Soviet envoy meets emir of Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — Soviet envoy Yuryev Mikhailov met Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah Monday and handed him a letter from Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Mr. Mikhailov, on a tour of six Middle East countries, arrived in Kuwait Sunday. Mr. Mikhailov has visited Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and is expected to leave Kuwait Tuesday for Tehran and then Turkey. On Sunday, Kuwait thanked the Soviet Union for its diplomatic support during the Gulf war and said it would welcome Soviet participation in its reconstruction plans. (see page 2)

S. Africa agrees to nuclear inspection

VIENNA (R) — South Africa, suspected of having nuclear weapons, has agreed to open its nuclear facilities to international inspection, a spokesman for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said Monday. South Africa signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in July 10 and has now signed the IAEA's new inspection agreement. "Vienna, where the IAEA is holding its annual general conference, he said South Africa declared that the agreement would enter into force immediately. This means we will be able to gain a full safeguard inventory to send inspectors," he said.

Bank blast kills 3 in Iraqi town

BAHRAIN (R) — The fuel tank of a water tanker exploded, the center of a northern Iraqi town, killing 13 people, a U.N. official said Monday. Two other men, collecting water from a well to distribute to mountain areas, were destroyed in Thursday's blast and subsequent fire. At least 17 injured people were taken to hospital. Ranya, about 10 kilometers northwest of Baghdad, is in an area controlled by Kurdish guerrillas. The U.N. official, who was in the town at the time, said the blast was caused by a gas leak.

Dispute with Israel tests U.S. will — Crown Prince

AMMAN (R) — Crown Prince Hassan said Monday, ahead of a visit by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, that the dispute between Israel and the United States over Iran guarantees would test Washington's commitment to peace. "It is really a question of U.S. interest in the future to assure all the parties... that this is a longer-term commitment," the Crown Prince said, adding that Israeli opposition had diluted previous American positions on Middle East issues. Mr. Baker arrived in Israel Monday on a storm over the guarantees to help resettle hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews. A top aide to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said U.S. President George Bush's threat to veto any early attempt by Congress to approve the guarantees harmed the search for peace. Prince Hassan, in an interview with Reuters and the international television news agency Vis-

news, said, "I think it is a question of political stamina to see who wins through at the end of the day." But the Crown Prince did not rule out peace talks taking place if Israel continued building new settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. "Clearly anything is possible given the political will but clearly there is going to be a great deal of resentment (if more settlements are built)," he said. "I don't know who stands to gain effectively by maintaining the crescendo of extreme positions on either side..." he added. Arab states and the Palestinians are asking for a halt to Israeli settlement activity to allow a Middle East peace conference to convene in October. Washington, Israel's main donor, also sees the settlements as an obstacle to peace and Mr. Bush said he wanted Congress to delay considering the Israeli request so that nothing would

undermine the prospects for peace. Israel needs loans worth \$10 billion to resettle Jewish immigrants mainly from the Soviet Union. Arab states fear the money will encourage Israel to move more Jews to the occupied territories, making a settlement more difficult. Jordan has been pushing for a solution to the four-decade-old Palestinian problem and has made clear it does not want to pose any obstacles to convening a conference which could result in Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. The Kingdom is expected to ask Mr. Baker this week for assurances that the Palestinians will choose their delegates to the talks and that the conference will be based on U.N. resolutions calling for Israel to trade land for peace. The Crown Prince said he believed that Mr. Bush's statements on settlement building were in



themselves assurances that Washington would press for an Israeli pullout. He said the issue of Palestinian participation at the conference proposed for October had not yet "crystallized." Jordan and the Palestinians are discussing fielding a joint delegation to the talks to help bypass Israeli objections to talking with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Bomb explodes in Beersheba

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — A bomb exploded in an outdoor market in the southern city of Beersheba Monday, wounding a man and a woman, Israeli news reports said. The blast occurred less than four hours before U.S. Secretary of State James Baker was due in Israel to discuss efforts to arrange Middle East peace talks.

At least 30 Palestinians, most from the occupied territories, were detained for questioning as police combed the area, Israeli radio said. There were no immediate claims of responsibility. The reports said a homemade bomb placed in a bag of apples exploded at a vegetable and fruit stand at about 11 a.m. (0900 GMT) in Beersheba, about 90 kilometers south of occupied Jerusalem. The injured included a Soviet immigrant man, who was wounded in the foot and treated at a nearby hospital, they said. A woman was treated for a slight arm injury, they added. "There was a huge, deafening explosion," David Amar, owner of a nearby fast food stand, said on the radio. "We then saw someone hopping around on one foot at the site, his other leg looked mangled." Police, who closed the market after the attack, did not answer the telephone for several hours afterwards Monday at the city's main police station. Unknown assailants Saturday ambushed an Israeli army jeep in the occupied West Bank, killing one soldier. The attack took place in the village of Misliya, 10 kilometers south of the town of Jenin, the army said. On Sunday, masked men identifying themselves as members of the Black Panther vigilante group marched through the nearby village of Qabatiya and announced over loudspeakers they killed the soldier to avenge the slaying of one of their own by an army undercover squad earlier this month, Arab reporters said. There has been a sharp increase in the use of guns by Palestinians against soldiers in recent weeks, and most of the attacks occurred in the Jenin area.

The Black Panthers in the Jenin area are armed and have been blamed for the slayings of at least 32 Arab informers this year, according to Arab reports. The slain soldier, Yoran Cohen, 20, was buried Sunday in a military cemetery in the town of Afula. He was the first soldier killed in the occupied territories since March when two soldiers were run down by a Palestinian driver in the Gaza Strip. In response to Saturday's killing, the army imposed an around-the-clock curfew on Misliya and neighbouring villages, and a night curfew on the town of Jenin. Troops also cut down an olive grove in which the assailant allegedly was hiding.

Clerics: No imminent hostage release

BEIRUT (Agencies) — The leader of Hizbollah said Monday the return by Israel of 51 prisoners and the bodies of nine guerrillas was not enough to warrant releasing more Western hostages. In other developments, the country's highest-ranking Shiite cleric said he thought four missing Iranian and five Israeli servicemen, whose fate is tied in with the hostage issue, are dead. Syria's foreign minister told his German counterpart, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, that Syria would seek the release of two Germans believed held captive in Lebanon, Mr. Genscher's office said. Farouq Al Sharaa, Syria's foreign minister, and Mr. Genscher met in Bonn to discuss a number of issues, Mr. Genscher's office said in a statement. The two men praised "the huge

efforts of the United States" towards putting together a Middle East peace conference, the statement said. "A further topic was the hostage question," the statement said. "The Syrian foreign minister reaffirmed that he will continue efforts for the release of the German hostages," the ministry statement said without further elaboration. Heinrich Strubeig, 50, and 29-year-old Thomas Kempfner, members of the German ASME relief agency, disappeared in Lebanon on May 16, 1989. Sheikh Abbas Musawi, head of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah, warned against excessive optimism on an early end to the plight of Westerners held captive in Lebanon. Sheikh Musawi said further con-

cessions from Israel were needed before the seven-year hostage saga could be brought to an end. "We want a speedy end to this issue but we warn of excessive optimism in this case because things with the Israeli enemy cannot end in such a speed," Sheikh Musawi told a news conference at his house in Beirut's northern suburbs areas of Bir Al Abed. "I say as a fact: The only gate to solve the hostage crisis can be (obtained) through American pressure on Israel or through more concessions by Israel. Otherwise, I don't see any possible solution to this issue neither sooner nor later." Sheikh Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, spiritual leader of Lebanon's pro-Iranian Shiites

Soviet leaders consider economic union

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Soviet republican leaders Monday considered joining together in an economic union that would respect their independence and might save the country from financial collapse and a winter of hardship. Radical economist Grigory Yavlinsky, the main author of the restructuring proposals, told a meeting of the state council that his plan recognized independence declarations and was aimed at freeing the grave crisis. "Its main provisions include free enterprise and private property, free movement of commodities and services over the entire territory of the conceived union," the Soviet news agency TASS quoted him as saying. The state council, comprising President Mikhail Gorbachev and the republican leaders, is a transitional body set up to rule the country until creation of a new political confederation. It discussed food shortages looming this winter and cooperation with the West as well as the economic treaty. Mr. Yavlinsky said the market-oriented plan would allow former Soviet republics to create their

own currencies but there would also be a common monetary unit, presumably the rouble. Soviet bankers and officials have spoken in recent weeks about establishing a "rouble zone" as the foundation of a new system of economic cooperation that would avoid a breakdown in vital trade ties. Since last month's failed coup, several republics have declared their independence from Moscow and the centralized system which they have been locked into for decades. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Georgians mobbed the centre of their capital Monday in rival rallies that marked the fiercest confrontation so far over the fate of President Zviad Gamsakhurdia. Decrying Mr. Gamsakhurdia as a dictator, an estimated 30,000 people mobbed downtown Republic Square to force former prime minister, Tengiz Segua, demand that the president resign. Just 200 metres away a short time later, thousands of Gamsakhurdia supporters rallied equally loudly, some waving portraits handed out in advance and

chanting slogans. A large mass of local police, some with sidearms, stood arm-in-arm through the centre of the 200-metre stretch separating the pro- and anti-Gamsakhurdia forces in an apparent attempt to head off any clash. Later, thousands of opposition supporters rallied outside the government-controlled TV station, the republic's only television since Russian and Soviet broadcasts were interrupted last week. "We want access to TV," said student Michael Dzheguzi, 16. "People in the villages and towns outside Tbilisi don't know what's going on." The political temperature and language hurled from each side have mounted steadily since local militia forces opened fire on an opposition demonstration Sept. 2, wounding five people. Monday's rallies were by far the biggest in months, local observers said. They seemed destined to make it even more difficult for the small Caucasus Mountains republic in the southern Soviet Union to find a peaceful path to the independence all sides say they seek.

Jordan expects written assurances from Baker

By Lamin K. Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan is expecting U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, who visits Amman this week, to confirm previous American assurances to Jordan that the proposed Middle East peace conference will be based on the principles outlined by President George Bush on March 2. Foreign Minister Abdullah Ensour said Monday. "The conference should not be inconsistent with President Bush's initiative," Dr. Ensour told Jordanian journalists Monday at a meeting held at the Jordan Press Association (JPA). Dr. Ensour revealed that during his last visit to Jordan, Mr. Baker had assured Jordan that the U.S. remained committed to the principles outlined by Mr. Bush regarding the basis of an Arab-Israeli settlement, but that Jordan was waiting for written assurances. "We were given verbal assurances. We want written ones," said Dr. Ensour. According to Dr. Ensour, the verbal American assurances are the following: — The peace conference will be based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which clearly involve exchanging land for peace. — American commitment to what Mr. Bush said in March concerning the need to recognise the Palestinian people's political and legitimate rights.



Dr. Ensour emphasized the significance of the recognition of the political rights of the Palestinians. — The conference will be based on respect for secure borders for all the parties involved. — The objective of peace in the region involves demilitarisation of all parties in the region — a principle outlined by Mr. Bush. — The U.S. does not recognise Israel's annexation of Jerusalem. Jordan has also asked for assurances that Jerusalem would not be excluded from the negotiations and that the conference would take into consideration the Palestinian right to repatriation in accordance with the U.N. resolutions. Dr. Ensour indicated that Jordan expected Mr. Baker to confirm these assurances and that understanding between Jordan and the U.S. to further develop following the U.S. administration's decision to seek to delay discussions on Israeli request for \$10 billion in loan.

He said that the American position indicated that both Mr. Bush and Mr. Baker were serious about the peace process. "We believe that Mr. Bush's position is serious and should be trusted," he said describing the American president's insistence on postponing congressional discussion on Israel's request as an unprecedented step by a U.S. president. Despite the encouraging signal emanating from the U.S., Dr. Ensour repeatedly stressed during the meeting that Jordan had no illusions about the outcome of the peace conference but is seeking the best conditions possible to secure the well-being and stability of Jordan and Palestinian national rights. However, he said, there should be no Arab-Israeli negotiations without Palestinian approval. "We have not and we shall not accept any Arab-Israeli negotiations without Palestinian approval," he pledged. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has not yet given its authorisation for Palestinian participation in the peace conference. The organisation is expected to declare its position, or at least the basis of Palestinian participation, at the Palestine National Council, which is expected to be held in Algiers next week. Dr. Ensour implied that Jordan was expecting a positive PLO position on the issue of Palestinian participation within a joint

Baker meets with Shamir and Palestinians amid growing rift

ISRAELI GREET U.S. SECRETARY WITH TOMATOES
OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker held talks on the Middle East peace process with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir Monday amid tension over the U.S. delay of loan guarantees for the Jewish state. The meeting with Mr. Shamir lasted about 3-1/2 hours, and Shamir aide Avi Pazner said after the session that the two would talk again Tuesday. "Because the sides did not conclude their discussions they will meet again tomorrow morning," Mr. Pazner told reporters. He characterized the talks as conducted in a "friendly atmosphere" and said they involved "the peace talks... as well as a number of bilateral questions and problems connected with the guarantees." Mr. Baker was to start talks shortly with Palestinian leaders. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) had given its blessing for three Palestinians to hold talks with Mr. Baker. They were Faisal Hussein, university professor Hanan Ashrawi, and Dr. Zakaria Al Agha, head of the Gaza Strip Medical Association. The Palestinian news agency WAFAP said the three were to spell out PLO demands for guarantees in the peace talks. They would also try to spell out U.S. positions on unspecified "fundamental questions" and present them to the Palestine National Council (PNC), which is to convene in Algiers on Sept. 23, WAFAP cited a

PLO spokesman as saying. The PNC is expected to give a formal Palestinian response to the conference. The PLO has condemned Israeli insistence that neither the organisation nor East Jerusalem Arabs have a role. It is Mr. Baker's seventh peace shuttle since the Gulf war but his first since President George Bush ignited uproar in the Jewish state by asking Congress to delay answering Israel's request for \$10 billion in loan guarantees. Mr. Shamir's top aide, Yossi Ben-Aharon, said ahead of Mr. Baker's return that U.S. opposition to early loan guarantees harmed the search for peace. Some Israeli cabinet ministers assailed Mr. Bush, one calling him a liar and an anti-Semite. The daily Yedioth Ahronoth attacked such statements as adding "poisonous fuel to the fire." "President Bush is not an anti-Semite," it editorialized. "We can manage without the loan guarantees. But without peace, we cannot." Mr. Ben-Aharon, regarded as the prime minister's most influential policy adviser, said Israel would not renege on previous understandings about proposed peace talks but noted that many issues remain unresolved. "Things like preventing loan guarantees cast their shadows on the process and on the positions of the United States, which for us is the leading party, the honest and trustworthy broker," Mr. Ben-Aharon told army radio. "Of course this does harm."

Israel wants the loan guarantees to finance the integration of up to a million Soviet immigrants by the mid-1990s. It conditionally accepted Mr. Baker's plan for an October peace conference but key points — such as who represents Palestinians — remain to be settled. Mr. Baker arrived from the Soviet Union where he toured newly-independent Baltic states. He was due to leave Israel for Arab states Tuesday. Israeli demonstrators tossed tomatoes at Mr. Baker's motorcade as it entered occupied Jerusalem, underlining the acrimony in U.S.-Israeli relations. Police said an escort car was hit on the way to Mr. Shamir's office. "We've always known there would be bumps along the way... we said it would go forward a little, maybe side back some, go forward," Mr. Baker said at a news conference in the Soviet Union before flying to Israel. Despite the new difficulties, Mr. Baker insisted: "I'm not discouraged at all... we're going to keep working because I think the world wants peace in the Middle East." Palestinians were pleased but Israelis were incensed by Mr. Bush's veto threat. Some Israeli officials fear Washington is using the guarantees to pressure Israel to make "concessions" to the Arabs. Others worry the delay is to punish Israel for continuing to move Jewish settlers to the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Mr. Ben-Aharon also said Israel was insisting on a "memorandum of understanding or some kind of sum-

Jordan, facing health crisis, asks for international assistance

By Rana Sabbagh
Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan, saying babies were being born in hospital corridors because of lack of beds, appealed for world aid Sunday to salvage its once-model health care system. Officials said more than 230,000 Jordanians who have fled to Amman since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait last August and thousands of Iraqis unable to get care in Baghdad's war-devastated health system were straining Jordan's already tight resources. Up to one-third of Jordan's 3.2 million population rely on state-run hospitals which officials say face severe shortages of beds, equipment and medicines.

"The pre-crisis situation was critical," Health Minister Mamdouh Al Abbadi told Reuters. "The returnees were the straw that broke the camel's back." He said he had asked the World Health Organisation (WHO) to launch a world appeal to help Jordan meet a 34 per cent increase in demand on state health care because of the refugees, mainly of Palestinian origin, expected to reach 300,000 by the end of 1991. Jordan, with an \$8 billion foreign debt, says it was plunged into an economic crisis in 1988 following the cut off in Arab aid. Dr. Abbadi said Jordan's infant mortality rate, which fell to 38 deaths per thousand

1990 from 80 per thousand a decade ago, now appeared to be rising again. He did not have figures. Officials said Iraqis, many poor and unable to get primary care in their country because of a severe shortage in medicines and medical supplies, were flocking to Jordan. They ranged from heart and kidney patients seeking free treatment at hospitals to war casualties needing neuro-surgery. Government hospitals are allowed to treat only Jordanians but officials say many have been turning a blind eye to the foreign patients. "In the name of humanity, you can help a handful of patients at state hospitals but

you cannot open all your facilities to them when your own population is hardly making it," one said. The ministry's 1991 budget of JD 53 million has already hit a deficit of JD 3 million and the short-fall is expected to double by the end of the year, Dr. Abbadi said. Dr. Abbadi said Jordan would have to spend at least JD 145.5 million in capital investment and operating costs over the next five years to cope with the influx and an annual population growth of 3.5 per cent. Among the ministry's most urgent needs were new patient beds to care for emergency cases, 50 dental chairs and X-ray and kidney dialysis

machines, he said. Dr. Abbadi said many kidney patients who needed two dialysis sessions a week were given access to the machine only once a week, further endangering their health. He said many women were delivering children in government hospital corridors and routine surgery was now being delayed for at least eight months instead of two weeks before the crisis. Expensive medicines used for the treatment of cancer, heart problems and psychiatric illnesses were also badly needed. Once-full pharmacy shelves at government hospitals and clinics which supply most medication free of charge were

virtually bare. The exodus from Kuwait, a 50 per cent devaluation of the Jordanian currency and tight U.S.-allied inspection of ships in the Red Sea, were main factors for the chronic medicine shortages at state hospitals, Dr. Abbadi said. The allied vessels are enforcing a U.N. trade embargo imposed on Iraq since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The port of Aqaba was Baghdad's main route for imports before the Gulf crisis. Medicines and basic food-stuffs are exempt from sanctions but ships carrying them — including those with cargoes destined for Jordan — are being delayed while their manifests are checked.



KING VISITS GHQ — His Majesty King Hussein, the supreme commander of the Jordanian Armed Forces, visited Monday the Army General Command where he was received by Chief of Staff General Fathi Abu Taleh, the chief of staff's assistants, the commander of the Royal Air Force and the inspector general. King Hussein held a meeting with Gen. Abu Taleh and discussed with him issues of concern to the Armed Forces. King Hussein also met with the Armed Forces senior officers and reviewed with them the current situation in the region and the latest developments in the international arena. The King called on the officers to keep up the high standards attained by the army. His Majesty was accompanied on the visit by the King's military advisor, His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad. (Petra photo)

Road accidents increase in August

AMMAN (Petra) — A total of 53 persons were killed and 972 others injured in 2,178 road accidents in Jordan in August, according to a statistical bulletin by the Public Security Department (PSD). The number of dead was nearly 15 per cent more than that in July but the number of injured was only 9.2 per cent over the injured people in July. The Amman area accounted for the most of the number of accidents, which caused the death of 13 persons and 397 injuries.

Liberal, Constitution parliamentary blocs merge

AMMAN (J.T.) — Two parliamentary blocs Monday announced their merger under the Constitution Bloc, which subsequently nominated Thouqan Hindawi as his candidate for the Lower House's presidency in the coming parliamentary session. The two blocs, the Liberal and the Constitution blocs, said their merger came as a result of consultations between them over the past few weeks, according to an official statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra. The announcement quoted deputies Yusef Mubaidin and Ahmad Inab as saying that the merger of the two blocs would help them contribute more effectively towards parliamentary activity in the coming session. It said that the Constitution Bloc will now have 18 members. Following the announcement, the new bloc held a meeting and reaffirmed its nomination of Thouqan Hindawi as the bloc's candidate for the House's presidency. Yusef Mubaidin said the bloc's official spokesman and Dr. Fawzi Tameh as the bloc's rapporteur. Meanwhile, a report in Al-Dustour Daily said Monday that Deputy Yusef Khasawneh has resigned from the Islamic Movement Bloc. The paper said that Dr. Khasawneh declined to give reasons for his resignation.

Kindle and Comcent host computerised banking technology conference

AMMAN (J.T.) — Kindle, the leading international banking systems supplier and its local representative, Comcent Trading and Contracting Company — which is the leading Jordanian computer company, are hosting a week long banking technology conference for leading Jordanian banks at the Jordan Intercontinental Hotel from Sept. 14 to Sept. 21. The move falls in line with Comcent's expansion in the software business and commitment to the banking sector and is seen as a further strengthening of Kindle's commitment to the Middle East market in which it has been the dominant banking systems supplier for the last number of years. "The region represents over 20% of Kindle's business and the seminar is designed to illustrate our commitment to BANKMASTER's technological advancement and enhancement for the Jordanian and Middle Eastern markets," said Area Manager Hugh McAree. BANKMASTER is Kindle's award winning banking system and is one of the most widely installed systems of its kind in the Middle East and internationally. Unlike most of its competi-

Minister defends decision to replace non-Jordanian workers

AMMAN (Petra) — The adverse effects of the Gulf crisis on Jordan and the unemployment problem the country is facing at the moment have forced it to follow a policy which aims to substitute foreign workers with local workers, according to Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Dughmi. Jordan should come up with sufficient numbers of skilled workers of its own so the substitution can take place in light of the present difficult circumstances and in the wake of the eviction of Jordanian workers from Kuwait, the minister said in an address at the opening of a seminar called to review Jordan's need of workers in the industrial and service sectors between 1991 and 1993. He told the audience gathered at the Amman Chamber of Industry that Jordan is adopting this plan of substituting non-

Jordanian workers with Jordanians not out of a regional tendency directed against others, but because of pressing needs. The minister said that the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) has been providing the local labour market with trained and qualified workers and it will continue to do that to meet local needs. VTC Director General Ahmad Arwan told the seminar that the survey, conducted every five years, is aimed at defining the labour market's needs of workers and expected expansions. The survey, he said, was expected to help decision-makers identify the needs of the labour market, especially those institutions which employ at least five workers, Dr. Arwan said. He said that the survey covered 1,510 firms ranging from printing presses to bakeries. Its results will help the VTC to set its priorities in terms of providing training at its vocational centres, he added. The survey gave details about the total number of non-Jordanian workers employed in various companies and firms and the total number of local workers needed in each sector. The survey also showed that non-Jordanian workers are mostly employed in the services sector even as bakeries, restaurants, hotels and textiles and leather industries. The survey found that a high rate of non-Jordanian workers are also employed in the construction business and that total workers have a chance to be employed in the industry in the next three years.

Welfare Returnee Committee head meets with U.S. ambassador, requests help for expatriates

AMMAN (J.T.) — In an effort to enlist help for Jordan to cope with the influx of refugees, the head of the government-appointed Welfare Returnees Committee met Monday with American ambassador to Jordan Roger Harrison and discussed the committee's activities. A report by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that Salameh Hamad, who is also secretary general of the Interior Ministry, reviewed with the U.S. ambassador the plight of the returning expatriates and the difficulties encountered by the national committee to provide help to them. Mr. Hamad said that nearly 300,000 people have now returned to Jordan, straining the country's essential services. The task and in helping Jordan absorb the great number of people whose return has had severe effects on Jordan's socio-economic life, he said. Mr. Hamad has been meeting with ambassadors, heads of humanitarian and U.N. organisations operating in Jordan in a bid to acquire assistance that could help the government deal with the burden. The Ministry of Planning said Sunday that the influx of expatriates has brought about an increase of 10 per cent in the country's population and Minister of Planning Ziyad Fariz said that the country would need at least \$4.5 billion within the next five years to absorb and settle the returnees.



Salameh Hamad, national committee is facing difficulties in coping with this huge

Officials deny reports of increased criminal activity near downtown bus station

By Nur Said
Special to the Jordan Times
Some people have tried to sleep here but they were soon kicked out and told to get permission first. Ahmad, an Iraqi who preferred his last name not be used, said. The official said that although they are told to get permission, "permission is not granted." The only people that do sleep outside are drivers having just arrived in the early morning hours, he said. "They spend the rest of the evening in their cars waiting for daylight to break where either they leave or find a place to sleep," he said. An Iraqi who preferred anonymity also denied the rumours but said that there is quite a lot of sleeping in the area. "For example, if someone wanted to exchange \$100, they would take the money and run, never to come back. This has happened quite a few times," he said. "Reporters continuously come here," the official said. "But the situation is greatly exaggerated." For example, "if there was a fight between two Jordanians and another fight between a Jordanian and an Iraqi, the latter would get more attention amongst observers," he said. Meanwhile, there is an aura of psychological weariness among the people, said an Iraqi agriculturalist requesting anonymity. On the surface, he said all Iraqis are welcome by Jordanians and "we have had no problems with the government helping us." But internally, "I have questions about their loyalty because of the way Jordanians are taking advantage of our situation," he said, referring to the increasing prices of rent and hotels. "It is also taxis and other people who find out we are from Iraq trying to cheat us." A Jordanian, observing the interview, interjected angrily. "This is not directed at Iraqis but when there is more demand prices go up. As for the cheating from taxis or shop owners, it is not because they are taking advantage of Iraqis. Rather, it is attributed to the situation as a whole with all the returnees," he said. According to Ahmad, he is frustrated for another reason. "I have been to so many places hoping to get employed but I am turned down." Ahmad, who does not want to go back to Iraq, feels angry when he sees Egyptian workers being chosen over Iraqis.

Officials discuss various issues in open house meeting with Karak residents

KARAK (Petra) — A Cabinet minister and six Lower House of Parliament members have taken part in an open discussion over a host of issues of concern to Jordanians in general and residents of the Karak Governorate in particular. Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Mohammad Faris Tarawneh and deputies Mamoud Hweimel, Atef Betoush, Isa Midanat, Ahmad Kafawin, Matir Al Bustanji and Abdullah Zreiqat took part in the discussion. In his speech, Mr. Tarawneh reviewed the situation resulting from continued pressure on Jordan and the embargo on Aqaba, calling on the local community to shoulder its responsibilities and cooperate with the government in confronting such pressures. Mr. Tarawneh also outlined a draft law on political parties which is being examined by the Lower House of Parliament and the role of deputies in formulating a law that would suit the present critical stage in the country's history. Deputy Hweimel talked about the work of Parliament's Agriculture Committee and its efforts to increase the amounts of animal feed being distributed to small farmers. Deputy Betoush tackled the question of investments in Jordan and stressed that Parliament was seeking to increase such investments to promote stability. Deputy Midanat discussed reinstating government employees after they had been dismissed for political reasons. He said that the government was fully responsive to the deputies bids in this respect. Deputy Kafawin assured his audience that the government was giving due consideration to the employment in various public offices. He said that filling vacant post is being followed by the government at the recommendation of the Civil Service Commission. Deputy Bustanji reviewed the achievements of the Lower House of Parliament in the past two years. He also spoke about amended laws and the current efforts to build the new Karak Hospital with Italian government assistance, and endeavours to support Muta University near Karak. Deputy Zreiqat outlined the government's efforts to help the expatriates returning to the Kingdom. He called on the public to cooperate with the expatriates in launching investments and income generating projects.

Minister calls for balanced stories

AMMAN (Petra) — Youth Minister Saleh Irsheidat Monday met with members of the Jordanian Sports Media Federation and reviewed with them ways of raising the level of sports coverage in Jordan. He called members of the federation to be objective in writing their stories and stressed the need for them to follow constructive criticism techniques. The federation president, Nazmi Al Saeed, delivered a speech in which he said the sports media plays a key role in encouraging the youth to practise sports.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Monday receives the visiting British Deputy Undersecretary of State for Middle East and African Affairs Patrick Fairweather (Petra photo)

Crown Prince meets with British official, discusses ongoing peace efforts

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Monday discussed the Middle East situation and the plight of the Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates returning to Jordan at a meeting with visiting British Deputy Undersecretary of State for Middle East and African Affairs Patrick Fairweather. The British official, who arrived here Monday on a two-day visit to Jordan, heard from the Crown Prince about the Jordanian government's efforts to help establish peace in the region and to absorb the returning expatriates. The Crown Prince said that the influx of Jordanians and Palestinians was adversely affecting the socio-economic infrastructure in the Kingdom. Following the meeting with the Crown Prince, Mr. Fairweather said: "I am particularly lucky to be here at this particularly critical time for the discussion of problems of the region. I think there is real optimism for the first time about possibilities of a peaceful solution to the problem of Israel's relations with its neighbours and the Palestine problem." He said that Jordan has an important role to play in the peace process due to its strategic location and its demographic composition. The meeting with the Crown Prince, he added, offered him a good chance to identify the problems of the region at close range. In reply to a question by a reporter about Britain's contribution towards peace, Mr. Fairweather said that Britain works in concert with its partners in the European Community. On British financial aid to Jordan, Mr. Fairweather said that his country was providing some help to the Kingdom in technical fields but the major assistance comes through London's contribution through the European Community, which accounts for 20 per cent of the total amounts of assistance offered to Jordan. Mr. Fairweather said that the European Community should find a way of helping Jordan to deal with the expatriates question and Britain would discuss this problem with its European partners. The Crown Prince also met at the Royal Court Monday with Mohammad Kazem, an Iranian envoy, who brought a message from the Iranian leadership to His Majesty King Hussein Sunday. The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that the two sides reviewed the consequences of the Gulf crisis on the countries of the region and Iranian-Jordanian relations. The envoy made a statement following the meeting saying his meetings with Jordanian leaders were held in a brotherly atmosphere. He said that the two sides exchanged views about various issues of concern to Iran and Jordan with particular attention to the Palestine question. Mr. Kazem said that the Palestine problem is the central issue for the Islamic nation.

Jordanian parliamentary delegations to visit Indonesia, Chile and Pakistan

AMMAN (Petra) — Three separate Jordanian parliamentary delegations will be going to Indonesia, Chile and Pakistan in the next three weeks to attend conferences and hold meetings with parliamentarians from those three countries, according to an official statement from the Lower House of Parliament Monday. The announcement said that House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat will lead a five member delegation on a visit to Indonesia starting Thursday. The visit comes upon the invitation of the Indonesian parliament. The delegation also includes deputies Yusef Mubaidin, Atta Shaban, Mohammad Al Mumar and Hamam Said. During the visit, the announcement said, the delegation will discuss parliamentary affairs and cooperation in parliamentary fields. Dr. Mohammad Addouh Al Zaben, a house member, will lead another delegation on a visit to Chile on Oct. 3 to take part in the Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting being held there. According to the announcement, Dr. Zaben will be accompanied by House member Ali Hawandeh, Senate member Ibrahim Izzeddin, the parliament's secretary general and another unidentified official. Deputy Atef Al Betoush on Friday will fly to Pakistan at the head of a parliamentary delegation on an official visit at the invitation of Pakistan's parliament, the announcement said. It said that the delegation, which is made up of deputies Ahmad Abbadi, Mohammad Abu Faris, Abdul Rahim Ekour, Deeb Anis and Yaqoub Qarash, will hold talks with Pakistani parliamentarians on Jordanian-Pakistani relations.

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WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ An exhibition of naive painting from Germany at Abdul Hameed Shomou Foundation Gallery.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Omar Basal at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of oil paintings and ceramics by Iraqi artists Nadim Minham, Haima Mahdi and Halder Al Masrouf at Hotel Jordan Intercontinental.
- ★ Art exhibition by Jordanian artist Salem Kanaan at the Royal Cultural Centre's Exhibition Hall.
- ★ Art exhibition by Huda Khawariz Modir at the Royal Cultural Centre.

LECTURES

- ★ Lecture entitled "Khairat Ez-Zarqa, the City of the Early Bronze Age in Northern Jordan" by Prof. Siegfried Mittmann of the University of Tübingen at the Goethe Institute — 7 p.m.
- ★ Lecture in Arabic on Juvenile Delinquency at the Royal Cultural Centre — 6:30 p.m.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975

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Feeling cheated

THAT ISRAELI demonstrators followed up their leaders' vehement attack Sunday on U.S. President George Bush with tomato-rocket attacks at Secretary of State James Baker's motorcade on Monday comes as no surprise to us in the region. Clearly, it was only a manifestation of the Israeli frustration over the possibility that the Jewish state might find itself in an uncomfortable position in pursuing its stubborn rejection of the concept of land for peace at the proposed peace conference. But, more than anything else, it should serve as an eye-opener for those uninformed (and of course those who feign ignorance) in Washington and elsewhere in the United States that they are greeted with garlands and gun-salutes in Israel as long as they serve the Jewish state's interests and stand to incur Israeli wrath the moment they are seen stepping out of line (We wonder what the American taxpayers think of a country which gets billions of American assistance but calls the American president a liar and throws tomatoes at the American Secretary of State).

It is a foregone conclusion that the atmosphere in Israel, which definitely feels cheated out of what had appeared to be the strongest bargaining position, is getting increasingly hostile towards its hitherto guardian angel who appears to be having a change of heart at a most crucial moment in time and refusing to be part of the Jewish state's carefully orchestrated campaign to strengthen its fait accompli in the form of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. The question that confronts Shamir, Sharon, Ze'evi & Company is whether they should opt for more "sons and daughters" to come to the "promised land" or for continued occupation of the "unpromised land."

Yet, the Israeli leaders know only too well that having failed to cow President Bush, they will have to budge and seek a face-saving formula. American Jewish leaders are now advising them to hurry up and seek a middle course formula instead of pushing ahead with their maximalist positions before the fallout from the confrontation over their request for \$10 billion in loan guarantees gets out of control.

Jewish leaders in the U.S. have come to this conclusion after President Bush and the American people showed no sign of retreat in spite of all the hysteria that they brought upon the U.S. Congress.

In this sense, by standing firm in the face of Israel's efforts to undermine the White House over the loan guarantee issue, Mr. Baker's hands have also been strengthened. For starters, he arrived in Israel after the resolve of the Americans to back up the Bush administration on this issue has been effectively proven.

Yet the central question of where and how all this confrontation-episode between the U.S. and Israel would affect the peace conference the date and the venue of which have yet to be announced remains to be seen. After all, Mr. Baker's trip is not intended to finish off the stand-off between his president and the Israeli hardliners on the loan issue and put the final touches on a deal. In view of the fact that his seventh visit to Israel would be his last before the peace talks are scheduled to begin, his agenda must be full of substantive subjects that still await resolution. On top of the list is of course the issue of Palestinian participation and the subject of Jerusalem. As French President Francois Mitterrand commented recently, it is in the interest of all parties, and above all Israel, to have authentic Palestinian representatives doing the negotiations on behalf of their people. Since a permanent solution is being sought, how else can one attain this big order without the central party to the entire Arab-Israeli conflict being genuinely represented by persons who have a mandate to commit the Palestinian people to such a durable peace formula? One would have thought that Israel would be the first party to insist on real spokesmen from the Palestinian side lest the entire peace exercise risks being depicted by future generations of Arabs as nothing but a farce.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

NO AMERICAN president before George Bush had ever dared confront Israel or the Zionist lobby in the United States as adamantly as it is currently happening, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Monday. All the previous U.S. administrations had been keen to show themselves as the staunchest supporters of Israel, providing it with all financial and military assistance it required and which enabled it to consolidate its hold on Arab land, said the paper. This has been the case so far until this moment when we see President Bush taking a firm stand against Israel's request for guarantees for a \$10 billion loan, the paper continued. It should be noted, however, that President Bush now considers himself as an international hero, having caused the collapse of world communism, brought about the dismemberment of the Soviet empire and sent his forces to crush the Iraqi military might in the Gulf war, said the paper. It seems that the president does not want to see Israel and the world Zionism steal the glamour of such victories from him and it seems that he is intent to crown his glory by carrying out plans for a settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict, regardless of whether he pleases Israel in this move or not, the paper added. President Bush, who is starving the Iraqi people after destroying their economic infrastructure, does not care about the Arabs and their interests, but he is after personal gains and does not wish to see the Zionists steal the achievements from him, the paper said. President Bush does not wish to see Israel come out victorious over the only superpower of the world and over a president who has accomplished so much for himself and become a national hero in his own country, the paper said. For this reason, the paper added, one could expect Mr. Bush to resort to the American people for support for his plans to protect his own victories.

Although we believe the current tension between Israel and the U.S. administration over the question of loan guarantees for Israel could have an adverse effect on the peace process, the U.S. president holds sufficient power this time to impose his will and implement its plan, said Al Dustour Arabic daily Monday. The U.S. administration's position, the paper said, is displayed in the fresh tour of the region by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and the U.S. president's determination to stand by his own words to achieve a settlement at all costs, the paper added. As the U.S. president is manifesting his resolve to resist the Zionist lobby's pressure in Congress, we hope his secretary of state will achieve success in his new endeavour, the paper said. We have no doubt that the Americans are in a position to impose their will and to overcome any difficulties in the way of convening a peace conference, given the recent firm stand of the U.S. president, one can only remain optimistic about the prospects of the coming conference and its results, the paper added.

Europe and the Middle East — why so many misunderstandings?

By Erich Gysling

WE all know it: Europeans and Americans have difficulties in understanding the Middle East. Why is this? What is at stake? Are the mentalities too different, are there too many burdens of history, are we divided on the ground of cultural and religious differences and tensions, is the language a barrier?

I will try to explain some of the problems and furthermore I will try to describe misunderstandings and prejudices. There are, as we all know, prejudices, and it might be interesting to think about the reasons.

Whenever I speak about the Middle East here in this country, I will be confronted with one question from the audience: Is it true that the Arab World acts just in an emotional way? Of course I answer with a no — and then try to explain things in the following way:

Generally politicians in the Arab World handle things just as sensibly as European politicians. With some exceptions, of course, just as we have exceptions in our region of the world. But there is, as it seems to me, a difference: policy and politics in the Arab World usually is not an abstract matter, but a very solid one. You will not find many theoreticians and real ideologues. The Arab political personality usually takes into consideration, what effect an act or a speech or a decision will have on that part of his community which is relatively close to him.

The level of a large family usually is his first point of reference, which means a group of maybe two thousand or three thousand persons. This makes policy and policy-making in the Arab World much less abstract than policy-making in the West. The relatively small circle of people which really count for an Arab politician creates, on the other hand, often a certain distance already between the level of those who decide in political matters and the large masses of the population.

This fact is an indicator for certain problems in the Arab World: there are large groups of population in different countries of the region that hardly identify with the state as such. In many cases the respective state is considered as a not very precise body, sometimes even as an artificial creation. And very often the boundaries of the states have, as well as know, been artificially created by the former colonial powers, especially by France and the United Kingdom. So we should not be surprised that the state as such often does not create warm feelings in the minds of those who live in this state.

Disputes about borders of states became prominent during the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait, when the Iraqi ruler declared, once again, that his government would not recognise the boundary-lines between the two states, given the fact that these lines had been drawn by the former colonial power, the British — he just forgot to add that the non-recognition of this border would lead to the conclusion that the borders of Iraq are just as artificial as those of any other state in the region and that Iraq's legitimacy would be as questionable as the legitimacy of Kuwait.

Beginning a discussion about this point would, this is obvious, lead to a broad discussion about territorial rights of a great number of Middle-Eastern countries.

But let us go back to the question: what are the reasons for so many misunderstandings be-

tween the West and the Middle East? There are diverging concepts about the question of power-sharing.

The Western ideal is based on the idea of checks and balances, of power-sharing with minorities and of limiting the use of power by accepting party pluralism and cultural diversity. I do not dare say that these ideas are alien to the Arab World: we see a number of attempts of establishing democracy and multi-party systems. Jordan is one of these examples, Algeria is another one — even if the West does not like the idea that Islamic fundamentalists are going to be elected by the free decision of the people. I personally think that it is up to the people in the respective countries to decide about their system. This does not mean, of course, that there are no differences of opinion regarding certain aspects of a system dominated by Islam.

One of the problems, looking at the Arab World and the world of Islam from a Western perspective, consists in very different interpretation of what freedom is. Islam, strictly interpreted, does not recognise individual rights. The right, every right, comes from God, and it is rather the collective body of human beings that is entitled to exercise this collective right than individuals. This is one of the reasons why we witness a controversy about human rights between the West and the Middle East.

The Syria born, great orientalist Professor Eassan Tibi strongly emphasises that there exists a universal human right and that we should not tolerate exceptions derived from an interpretation of Islam. This leads to the conclusion that those who respect the individual's rights should demand from politicians in the Arab World to respect these rights of the individuals, the human rights, in their region as well.

By and large we see that the concept of power sharing, of checks and balances is still rather weak in the Middle East. And looking back into history we can find an explanation for this: political decision-making and religious authority traditionally are not divided in the Middle-Eastern world where Islam plays an important role. The Prophet's preference, on the contrary, was a system of uniting political and religious power. The caliph of Medina was, so to speak, the incarnation of this belief in unity, of establishing a harmony between the two systems.

Islam generally cannot be considered, along the Western way of arguing, just as a religion, but it is a way of life which rules details of daily life, of economic life, of policy-making and religion. Dividing one aspect from the other does not fit into traditional thinking and the idea of dividing power has not found a broad way into modern thinking. This may explain, to a certain degree, the unwillingness to establish truly democratic systems that would require a strong will for power-sharing. It explains, again to a certain degree, the relative unwillingness to solve minority problems — taking minority problems seriously into consideration would require a will of sharing power, too. And we have a big number of countries in the Middle East with minority problems.

The concept of unity, the idea of undividedness of power, can, in certain cases, explain the authoritarian political style of some governments. It even has its influences upon a number of aspects in the private sphere. The authority of a father within a family is

still largely intact, and the same can be said about the authority of an older son over a young one.

We find, at least superficially, much more harmony in Arab families than we could find in a Western society. If we could look deeper into daily life, we probably could still find proof for what Arabs themselves traditionally said about their human relations, namely: There is rivalry between brothers, but in critical situations two brothers unite and challenge the rest of the family. If the situation becomes even more dangerous or critical, then the brothers unite with the rest of the family and challenge the rest of the world. The alliance of interest may be valid for an extended period of time or it may be for days, weeks or months only. We should not forget that the idea of forging alliances for a limited period of time goes back into the times before the life of the Prophet and was widely accepted during the lifetime of the Prophet — it is, as I see it, to a certain degree still alive, even if we live in a period where this tradition is gradually being transformed and replaced by a different system of values.

Trying to understand the Middle East means trying to understand that some of the highly important movements within the Arab World have to be interpreted as defensive actions against the colonial powers and against the growing influence of the West within the Middle East. The most important of these movements are the Arab nationalism and the Islamic fundamentalism. Both emerged as reactions against a West that intruded in a strong and often rough and ruthless way into the world of the Arabs.

Economic and political domination by the West became obvious in the nineteenth century, roughly speaking after Napoleon's invasion in Egypt and in connection with the industrial revolution in the West.

The Arabs began to ask themselves: why are we weak and why are the Europeans strong? They started to look for formulas in order to understand what happened and in order to find a way out from a desperate situation. There were groups of educated people that said: we have to acquire the knowledge of the West and adapt it to our needs. There was a different one that said: we became weak because we left the right path, the path of Islam, and all we have to do is going back to the roots, to the fundamentals of true Islam.

Islamic fundamentalism remained, for many years, the idea and the ideal of small groups, but it more clearly came to the surface when Hassan Al Banna created the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928. It never was a one-dimensional movement. Islamic fundamentalism had and has many aspects, some more moderate, some more radical, but the common denominator after all remained the same: going back to the roots of true Islam and find, on this path, true moral, human and political strength.

Today Islamic fundamentalism is a power within a number of countries, but Western people should not panic about this. We see, when visiting Iraq, that an Islamic republic may find a way for moderation, that an Islamic revolution is not much more of a threat than other revolutions and that there exists a possibility of establishing solid relationships between the West and an Islamic republic. But, of course, we should not forget that an Islamic republic has a very different value

system, compared with ours. In today's world we tend to forget details of historical events rather quickly. But it may be useful to look back to the year 1979, when Ayatollah Khomeini came back to Iran, when the shah was overthrown. There, probably for the first time, the West recognised that our Western order of priorities is not necessary the order of priorities for other cultures. We take it for granted that freedom is the goal number one of all the human beings and that they willingly accept insecurity as a result of freedom. I mean with these words that individuals in the West are used to make personal decisions and that they agree to accepting the consequences of these decisions.

There is only a fragile framework of values which gives an individual in the West moral, ethic, religious security. The priorities in an Islamic society may be very different: security in a moral and religious sense does have the priority, and people accept, as result, a limitation of their freedom. Ayatollah Khomeini told his followers very clearly what they had to do and what they had not to do. If they followed his teachings, they could be sure to be rewarded in the other world, and following the path of the Ayatollah meant and still means for millions of human beings to live in security, in a sphere where things are clear, where you do not have to question yourself all the time: is it right or is wrong?

What can be said about Islamic fundamentalism in this context can be said, as well, about nationalism. This movement has its highlights when Gamal Abdel Nasser was in power in Egypt. After Abdel Nasser the idea of Arab nationalism seemed to be prominent in Syria, Iraq and Libya. Algeria always followed, to a certain degree, its own way, which was characterised by the traumatic experiences of the war against French colonialism.

Many of the early Arab nationalists were members of minorities. They often felt a desire to underline their allegiance to a common Arab cause and they sought after ways and means to integrate into the general system of values within the Arab World. If we look back into the history of Arab nationalism, we will find ideologues who can be considered as rightists as well as leftists. Sati Al Husri belonged to the first of these categories, Michel Aflaq or Salah Bitar to the second one. In the first years, in the nineteenth century, the Arab nationalists only formed a small minority within the mainstream of the Arab World, and it took a long time before their theories were considered as useful instruments in order to challenge the challenge of the Western colonial powers. Arab nationalism was, just as well as the Islamic fundamentalism, a defensive line, but generally the nationalists recognised the need not only to modernise the Arab society, but also to acquire and adapt some of the Western ideas and Western technology.

Much later, when Arab nationalism was transformed into political power, the West and the European east had a tendency of confusing this ideology with a pro-communist line. Abdel Nasser's agreement with Czechoslovakia in the fifties of this century was misunderstood as the expression of a political preference in favour of Leninism. And when Abdel Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal, the West retaliated by denying the financial assistance needed for the construction

of the Aswan dam.

The communists in Eastern Europe went even further in their assessment of what Arab nationalist movements meant. They saw these movements as pre-stages of a transformation of the Arab states into communist systems. The misunderstandings prevailed during the Brezhnev era and were only slightly corrected after the expulsion of the Russians by Egypt when Anwar Al Sadat came to power.

So the foreign policy of the Soviet Union towards the Middle East remained full of contradictions and misunderstandings during the seventies and the eighties. In those years Moscow apparently enjoyed harmonious relations with countries such as Syria, Iraq and South Yemen. Mainly these relations were based on the obligations of the Russians to deliver those arms to the clients in the Middle East which the West denied.

We can go further in our analysis: the governments in the Middle East asked Moscow for assistance as a reaction to frustrations for which the West seemed to be responsible. And only one country namely South Yemen, officially adopted Marxist-Leninism as a state ideology, while the other so-called radicals (please forgive me I use this Western term in this context) pursued their own ideological line and took their distances from Moscow whenever this seemed to be useful.

Trying to understand the situation of today requires an understanding of at least certain aspects of history. The number of possible methods to approach this item is impressive, and the conclusions of what history can teach us with regard to the relation between the Middle East and the West differ widely.

One possible approach consists in trying to define the meanings of "dar al Islam" (the house of war and the house of peace) and Islam. It is true that traditional Islam divides the world into these two terms, but this should not mislead us to the conclusion that the Middle East considers itself as being in a constant war with those countries where Islam is not part of the value system of a majority.

During long times of history the two worlds lived peacefully side by side. We may say that times of war were rather the exception, even if we have to recognise that exactly those years and those tragic events found the strongest entry into history books. But in a generalised way we can define the times of war, before the nineteenth century at least, into not more than three important phases. The first one was the expansion of the Arab Islamic culture in the seventh and eighth century through North Africa into Spain and southern France. The next one was the phase of the Christian crusades, in the eleventh and twelfth century. Centuries later Turks and Europeans found themselves involved in a series of wars.

A new phase began after Napoleon's invasion of Egypt. From an Arab point of view the intrusion marked a turning point in different ways. The West, which up to then did not seem to be more advanced than the Middle East, started to demonstrate its technological skill and superiority. The brutal colonisation of Algeria by France, from 1830 onward, contributed to the deterioration of the relations between the two worlds. The conquests of British in Aden, in the area of the Gulf and Sudan came only decades later, and between 1901 and 1911 the French and the Italians occu-

pled remaining parts of Northern Africa. Other areas of the Arab World suffered the domination by the Turks, and during World War I the British promised Sharif Hussein their support for an independent Arab Nation after the defeat of Turks. The Sykes-Picot agreement and the Balfour declaration were attempts to divide the Middle East in areas under French and British domination and represented the beginning of the creation of the state of Israel.

In the documents of the League of Nations the term "Arabs" did not even exist, and in the Balfour declaration the Arabs were only mentioned as "existing non-Jewish communities".

It can easily be understood that the colonial domination was regarded as a challenge to the Arab population and that one rebellion was followed by the next one. Of course we can have different viewpoints on the question if the non-recognition of the partition of Palestine by the Arabs was wise or not, but we have to bear in mind that large segments of the Arab population just did not trust the West and anyone. History had taught them a lesson which they did not forget. It took many more years before relations started to improve again, and only to a certain degree.

The booming of Arab nationalism in the sixties and the strategy of the Soviets in the Middle East made the harmonisation of the relations difficult — even if we know today, as I mentioned earlier, that the ideology of Abdel Nasser in Egypt was misinterpreted by Western political leaders and that Arab nationalism never meant the transformation of the Middle East into a sphere of influence of the communists.

But even if some of the misunderstandings of times passed by did not exist any longer, others survived. The latest of these misunderstandings and misinterpretations emerged around the Iraq crisis and the war in January and February of this year. When Iraq's President, Saddam Hussein, first mentioned the term "jihad", many people here in the West felt a revival of old fears. The West translates "jihad" into holy war and interpreted President Saddam Hussein's aggressive policy as the result of religious fervour, directed only first against Kuwait, but in a larger context also against the West and against Western culture. Still today it is difficult to persuade people in this country that the raison d'être of Iraq's political system is not Islam, but the secular ideas of Baathism and that politicians in the Arab World in times of tension just feel tempted to make abuse of religious terms.

I personally am convinced that there is much common ground between the West and the Middle East and that the relations between the two worlds can be developed in a constructive way — if both sides recognised the different system of values in the two parts of the world. Recognising the different system of values and respecting the right of the partner to be different can mean practical terms for us: we should not force the Middle East to adapt our visions. It would be a tremendous mistake to enforce a so-called "new world order" in the Middle East just as a Western formula. If a new world order will emerge, it will only emerge as the result of a mutual understanding, as a construction in which both sides place their ideas and their visions. I do hope that this can be achieved. — Arab-Swiss Cooperation.

New social freedoms in Kuwait anger fundamentalists

By Diana Abdallah
Reuter

KUWAIT — The tall black-haired woman in tight jeans and low-cut top drew stares from men in the restaurant.

"By God, what is this? Is free new freedom in this Kuwait?" a visibly upset man asked his wife.

Men and women now mix freely in Kuwait, wear the latest Western fashions and even hold hands in public.

Many women still cover their bodies and faces with traditional black robes but more are seen unveiled and dressed in Italian and French designer clothes.

Iraq's occupation of the Gulf emirate triggered changes in the conservative social system here, and many Kuwaitis say they are not going back to the old ways. "There is no going back, no-

matter what. The barrier has been broken," said a young civil servant.

The changes have angered radical Muslims trying to pull the country back to Muslim traditions and its desert heritage.

A group calling itself "Commanding good deeds and forbidding evil" has launched a campaign to teach Kuwaitis Islamic values.

Its leader, Abdul Rahman Al Shuaibeh, said in a recent newspaper interview he was trying to recruit 1,000 people to mount street patrols to catch people who violate Islamic law.

He said the plans depended on the government granting his group legal status and on the cooperation of the Interior Ministry.

Ministry officials said nobody had the right to physically or verbally assault any citizen and asked people to report any such incidents to police.

The group's plan drew angry reactions from other Kuwaitis. Newspapers have been publishing editorials warning against possible political motives behind the group's calls for Islamic purity.

"The Kuwaiti people don't need anybody to teach them Islam," said one editorial.

Other newspapers said the group's plans might be a front to spread fundamentalism and to try to impose strict Islamic laws similar to neighbouring Saudi Arabia and Iran.

"This is not a simple matter. It could start with religious teachings but then develop into

organised militant groups... the government should try to control this from the start," a Western diplomat said.

Muslim fundamentalist leaders — apparently trying to satisfy Kuwait's Western allies — say they have no plans to copy the Iranian Islamic revolution.

"We want to advise Kuwaitis to hold on to Islamic values and norms and with cooperation with the authorities to eliminate the new social norms infiltrating our Arab and Muslim society," Mr. Shuaibeh said.

"We should not be compared to similar bodies in other Islamic countries. Soft persuasion and leniency will be the basis for our work."

Three of the seven groups in

Kuwait's opposition movement are fundamentalist — two Sunni and one Shiite. Before parliament was dissolved in 1986, fundamentalists controlled more than a quarter of the 50 elected deputies.

Diplomats say liberals fear the fundamentalists might gain more influence in parliamentary elections expected in October 1992. "If they become a majority in parliament, then all they are calling for could become a reality and this is what worries many Kuwaitis who want to lead a life free of strict Islamic norms," one diplomat said.

Change is apparent in the streets. In the Salmiyeh district, young boys and girls stroll every night — sometimes holding hands — in jeans and T-shirts.

Although Kuwait's state religion is Islam and its law include bans on alcohol and pre-marital sex, its oil wealth has brought a host of Western influences from bikinis to hamburgers.

The presence of U.S. troops in the emirate because of the Gulf war and the American role in freeing their country has encouraged people to further flout social conventions.

Despite the new freedoms, many people say a close-knit family is still an important part of the social structure.

"It is still very difficult for a Kuwaiti girl to go out on a date. It is all done in secret. But there is definitely a strong wind of change," said a Kuwaiti woman civil servant.

كلمة من الله

Jordan expects written assurances

(Continued from Page 1)

Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. But he stressed that Jordan would accept any decision that the PLO would reach and that no party has the right to intervene in naming or appointing the Palestinian delegates.

He said that Jordan's resentment and rejection of any interference in naming the Palestinian delegation was conveyed very clearly to Mr. Baker during his last visit here.

"The PLO has the right to name whoever it wants from whatever town and to raise whatever issues it wants to raise, especially concerning the status of Jerusalem," Dr. Ensour stressed.

Reaffirming Jordan's strong commitment to the Arab identity of east Jerusalem, Dr. Ensour stressed: "No Arab, Muslim or Christian can claim that Jerusalem is not Arab."

Dr. Ensour emphasised that Jordan's position was based on a realistic approach that takes into consideration the regional and international balance that resulted from the collapse of the Soviet Union and Iraq's defeat in the Gulf war.

He implied that Jordan was trying to reconcile between a strategy that will ensure its well-being under the growing political and economic pressures it has been placed under and a dignified stand that will not negotiate away the Arab national rights.

"We realise that there is a big gap between reality and illusions," he said. "But our top priority should be to preserve our homeland and to attain what the

Palestinian national rights that are attainable (at this stage)."

Dr. Ensour was indirectly responding to widespread scepticism among Jordanians that the suggested peace conference will not meet the minimum Palestinian national aspirations. Indicating full awareness and understanding of the public scepticism and mood, Dr. Ensour warned that doubts about the peace process should not be allowed to disrupt national unity and the democratisation process.

In an interview with the Jordan Times 10 days ago, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said that the political and economic pressures that are being placed on Jordan could hamper its constructive contribution to the peace conference.

Prince Hassan also said that the economic burden, resulting from the expulsion of about 300,000 Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates could work to undermine the country's constituency. Dr. Ensour warned that national unity should be given top priority in the coming phase to ensure the stability and security of Jordan.

National unity and a continuous dialogue between the government and the people were crucial elements that will enable Jordan to face the difficulties that peace process — taking into consideration the regional imbalance of power — will entail, he said.

He also indicated that the government was concerned in maintaining the harmony and consistency between the government position and the public opinion while also taking into consideration the new givens and dangers that lie ahead.

Nidal: A tale of struggle for human dignity

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — At the age of 22, a young Palestinian youth, imprisoned more than once in Israeli jails, suffers from kidney failure aggravated by the maltreatment he received during his incarcerations.

Like many youth in the occupied territories, who share more or less the same fate and tell almost the same story, this youth, who preferred anonymity for fear of Israeli reprisals, wanted to share his story with the world in the hope that one day his younger brothers aged 12 and 14 would be spared from the pain and misery that have become the bitter reality of his life.

Lying in one of the hospitals in Amman, this youth who will be referred to in this article as Nidal (struggle), is awaiting to be transferred to India, where he will undergo a second kidney transplant operation. The first operation was conducted last year in India, and according to Nidal it ended up being a failure because his body refused the transplant.

"I have to go back for another transplant because my body rejected the first one," Nidal said. "Unfortunately this time the organisation (Palestinian Liberation Organisation) cannot pay for the whole operation because as you know

they are a bit short on money after the Gulf crisis."

Nidal now awaits at the hospital for the completion of his legal papers and travel documents as well as the arrival of donations from different humanitarian organisations to fund his operation and his two week stay in India.

Nidal said that he had suffered from a minor kidney problem before, but, due to the inhuman treatment he received during his incarceration in Israeli jails, his situation worsened.

With anger and frustration, Nidal tells his story of struggle and survival in what he refers to as "an unforgettable homeland."

"If I had to choose between leaving Palestine knowing I will never see it again or going abroad for this operation, I would choose to stay," Nidal said.

His national struggle for some kind of recognition and a dignified life started at the age of 14. "I was jailed four times before the start of the intifada," Nidal recalls. "The first time I was taken in, I stayed for 18 days in prison without any formal charges." Nidal added that he was made to stand in the cold for two days without food, drink, or even permission to go to the bathroom.

"Sometimes the Israelis

would tie the prisoner's hands and lift him on a crane for a couple of minutes," Nidal said. "This is very painful because the whole weight pulls at the wrists and this causes them to bleed heavily."

With the start of the intifada in 1988, Nidal was arrested five times. On more than one occasion his arrest was due to suspicion, with no formal charges made against him.

"I was arrested for two months based on the testimony of an Israeli soldier," Nidal said. "The second time I was arrested, it was for six months, from April 8, 1988, to Oct. 18, 1988."

During this prison term, Nidal suffered a major blow to his already deteriorating health situation. The prison, known as Ansar, is situated in Naqab desert. Resembling a Nazi concentration camp, prisoners are required to build their own quarters.

"After they arrested us they blindfolded us and made us go into buses; then they drove us to this unknown place," Nidal said. "The first fifteen days when we arrived we did not know where we were."

Reminiscing about the prison, Nidal shivered and started recalling little details that seemed to upset him. Worried that this would affect his poor health, Nidal was asked to take

it easy, but as if the memories shook his foundations he insisted to go on.

"We were treated very badly. They would feed us dry bread and jam; the water we drank was hot, deliberately made so by painting the water tanks black, and polluted. If the heat during the day was intolerable, the nights were intensely cold, particularly that the guards kept our tents open," Nidal said.

Yet the most dramatic event that took place in the prison, was the Ansar massacre, in August 1988. Recalling the event, Nidal shook with anger, and recounted what happened. "One colonel and a second lieutenant went berserk and started shooting at the prisoners," Nidal said. "Two prisoners were killed and more than fifty wounded," he added.

This event prompted world condemnation and made the Red Cross intervene. "Red

Cross staff would make a visit every two weeks following this incident," Nidal said. "But nothing came out of it," he added, explaining that the prisoners were threatened by the Israeli military guards at the prison not to complain to the Red Cross people.

"There was one man, we called Tseibeh, who used to say that 'the Red Cross cannot do anything for you, I am the only one who can,'" Nidal said.

His second arrest also lasted for six months, from March 5, 1989 till Sept. 13 of the same year. "They tied me to a tree from 11 p.m. till 4 a.m. and it was very cold," Nidal said. "Then they forced me to stand under heavy rain for three days in a row, without food, or drink."

Nidal was again transferred to Ansar prison, but this time his situation had deteriorated so much that he was sent to the

prison doctor. The doctor, Nidal recalls, told him that his health situation was bad, but refused to allow him to be checked at a proper hospital. "I stayed for six months without proper medical treatment and after I was released from Ansar I went to a doctor who informed me that my situation was beyond repair," Nidal said.

So, on April 23, 1991, Nidal requested a permit allowing him to travel abroad for medical treatment. He was granted permission on July 7, 1991.

"My friends collected JD 100 needed to get my permission and here I am," Nidal said.

Nidal is in dire need of urgent funding and, although his life hangs on a thin thread, his enthusiasm for a better life and his struggle for national dignity are remarkable, setting yet another example of the bravery of the "children of stone."



Baker meets Shamir, Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

mary" from Washington on the conference's format.

Palestinians, too, hope to get answers from Mr. Baker.

Saeed Erekat, a Palestinian professor of political science, noted that the PNC is to meet in Algiers next week. "Baker knows very well that the PNC is about to meet and decisions for the Palestinian people will be taken in the PNC," Dr. Erekat said.

Palestinians have demanded that Israel stop its drive to move more

Jewish settlers to the occupied territories.

The Bush administration has repeatedly said the settlements are an obstacle to peace.

Mr. Ben-Aharon, who shares Mr. Shamir's antipathy to trading land for peace, said Israel would not join talks in which it would merely be forced to obey U.N. orders.

Arabs wanted a conference that "wouldn't be a forum of direct negotiations between equal partners but a tribunal where they will demand we carry out U.N. resolutions," he said. "That won't happen."

Clerics: No hostage release imminent

(Continued from page 1)

and Hizbollah's mentor, said the hostage crisis could be nearing an end but he said this depended on the flexibility of those involved.

"In principle, the (hostage) issue is moving in a direction that closes the file for good, but this depends on the nature and flexibility of the factions who actually control the case," he told British radio Monday.

"This file can be totally closed as soon as possible when the quiet diplomacy within which (U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez) de Cuellar is moving gets realistic opportunities to reach conclusive positive results," he added.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar is working to free up to 10 Western hostages — five Americans, two Britons, two Germans and an Italian — held by Lebanese fundamentalists along with six Israeli servicemen and hundreds of Arab prisoners detained by Israel.

Sheikh Musawi said Israel's release last week of 51 Lebanese prisoners and nine bodies of guerrillas was "a very incomplete step."

"The Israeli move should have been bigger. Israel should have

freed a bigger number of prisoners including Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid... we did not see a real positive step," he added.

Israel abducted Sheikh Obeid, a senior Hizbollah cleric, from his home in South Lebanon in 1989. Fundamentalist sources say he is a trump card for any exchange of hostages-for-prisoners.

Uri Lubrani, Israel's chief hostage negotiator, met Mr. Perez de Cuellar in Paris Sunday. The U.N. secretary general spent four days in Tehran working for a deal to swap the Westerners for Arab prisoners.

Israeli newspaper Yedioth Aharonoth said Mr. Lubrani was to hear from Mr. Perez de Cuellar on the fate of missing Israeli navigator Ron Arad, captured when his plane was downed in Lebanon in 1986.

Another pro-Iranian cleric, Sheikh Ahmad Taleh, said Saturday the captors would free one of the two Britons within 24 hours but later extended the timescale.

Sheikh Taleh replaced Sheikh Obeid as the Shiite spiritual leader in the South Lebanon village of Jibsheet.

Soviets in Cuba seen as friends but always foreigners

By Pascal Fletcher
Reuters

HAVANA — Soviet soldiers and technicians with their families have been a familiar sight in communist Cuba for the last 30 years but never really shook off their foreignness on an island more than 8,000 kilometres from home.

Their presence, which has numbered thousands in the past, is now in question as ties between the Caribbean Island and its nuclear superpower ally are, increasingly strained by the Soviet Union's swing away from communism.

On Saturday, the Cuban government said the Soviet decision to withdraw its troops from Cuba

was an invitation for a U.S. attack and it called for a simultaneous withdrawal of U.S. forces from a naval base on the island.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev surprised Cuba on Wednesday by announcing that talks would soon begin on the withdrawal of the largest group of Soviets on the island, 11,000 military personnel.

Cuba said in an article in the newspaper Granma on Saturday it was ready to accept a withdrawal of Soviet military personnel from its soil along with a parallel pullout of U.S. forces stationed at the Guantanamo naval base in eastern Cuba.

Besides the military contingent, the number of Soviet technicians on the island has been

reduced to about 1,000 over the last year. There are also several hundred diplomatic staff.

For many Cubans, the Soviet citizens who began arriving on the island from mid-1960 onwards to ever growing numbers were their first contact with the outside world.

Whether mingling with their Cuban hosts, shopping in their own special shops, or relaxing on Cuba's sun-kissed beaches, the Soviets are usually easy to spot with their mostly pale skins, stocky build, and fair hair.

Cubans, whose warm hospitality to foreigners is tempered by a sharp eye for weaknesses, jokingly call the Soviet "bolos."

This half-affectionate, half-mocking tag has less to do with

"holsevik" than with the Soviets' reputation for awkwardness in a Latin society where appearance is all important.

The Spanish "bolo" can mean a shapeless, badly constructed object.

While Soviet citizens, whether soldiers or technicians, can be found in all corners of the island, from Havana to the southern port of Ciego de Avila or the north-eastern nickel-mining town of Moa, they generally keep a relatively low profile.

"They live a life apart," a Cuban sugar engineer said.

The Soviets in Cuba have their own housing blocks, their own shops, their own schools and their own social clubs. Their diplomatic number plate 060 is almost as

ubiquitous as the Soviet Lada cars that fill Havana's streets.

Some Soviets have, however, earned an unflattering reputation among ordinary Cubans for having a sharp eye for business opportunities on the island's flourishing black market.

Cubans have also become used to Soviet goods, from arms to butter, as imports from the Soviet Union rose over the years to grab a 75 per cent share of the island's total imports.

But in the last year, even Soviet products have become more scarce on the bare shelves of state shops as turmoil in the Soviet Union increasingly disrupted the economic lifeline.

Most Cubans have a less effusive view of Soviet than the "eter-

nal brotherhood" so often trumpeted in the official media.

But they recognise Moscow saved Cuba from economic collapse and possible U.S. invasion after Washington turned its back on the island in the early 1960s, cutting diplomatic ties and imposing a tough economic embargo which still stands today.

"When everything else closed against us, the Soviets helped us," a Cuban communications technician said.

Cubans old enough to remember still vividly recall the high drama of the October 1962 missile crisis, when Cuba, backed by Moscow but in the from line, confronted the U.S. with more than 40,000 Soviet troops — plus missiles — on Cuban soil.

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Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	NEW YORK CLOSE Date 15/9/91	SINGAPORE CLOSE Date 16/9/91
Sterling Pound	1.7297	1.7300
Deutsche Mark	1.6900	1.6890
Swiss Franc	1.4802	1.4785
French Franc	5.7525	5.7523
Japanese Yen	134.08	134.20
European Currency Unit	1.2150	1.2127

USD Per STD
European Opening @ 8:00 a.m. GMT
Eurocurrency Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.45	5.45	5.56	5.75
Sterling Pound	10.31	10.00	10.12	10.12
Deutsche Mark	9.00	9.06	9.25	9.25
Swiss Franc	8.06	8.06	7.93	7.68
French Franc	9.12	9.18	9.25	9.31
Japanese Yen	7.00	6.50	6.25	6.06
European Currency Unit	9.56	9.56	9.68	9.75

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	345.05	6.80	Silver	4.05	.090

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin
Date: 16/9/91

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	.687	.689
Sterling Pound	1.1873	1.1932
Deutsche Mark	.4065	.4065
Swiss Franc	.4682	.4665
French Franc	.1193	.1199
Japanese Yen	.5114	.5140
Dutch Guilder	.3605	.3625
Swedish Krona	.1116	.1122
Italian Lira	.0543	.0546
Belgian Franc	.01975	.01985

Currency	Bid	Offer
Lebanese Lira	1.7700	1.7750
Saudi Riyal	.0770	.0772
Kuwaiti Dinar	.1829	.1837
Qatari Riyal	.1860	.1870
Egyptian Pound	.2050	.2150
Omani Riyal	1.7300	1.7450
UAE Dirham	.1860	.1870
Greek Drachma	.3600	.3600
Cypriot Pound	1.4500	1.4700

CAN Indices for Amman Financial Market
Date: 16/9/91

Index	14/9/91	Close	15/9/91	Close
All-Share	116.32		116.79	
Banking Sector	99.34		99.28	
Insurance Sector	119.69		119.31	
Industry Sector	141.26		142.87	
Services Sector	128.29		127.42	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday.

One Sterling	1.7300/10	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.1347/52	Canadian dollar
	1.6865/75	Deutsche marks
	1.9005/15	Dutch guilders
	1.4748/55	Swiss francs
	34.76/80	Belgian francs
	5.7430/80	French francs
	1261/1262	Italian lire
	134.05/15	Japanese yen
	6.1330/80	Norwegian crowns
	6.6075/25	Swedish crowns
	6.5100/50	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	345.15/345.65	U.S. dollars



London is now home to more than 70 Arab banks and financial institutions.

Survey finds London in danger of losing lead as global financial hub

LONDON (R) — London could be in danger of losing its position as a global financial hub unless it addresses transport problems and the threat from rival European centres, a survey of foreign banks showed Monday.

The survey by the London Chamber of Commerce (LCC) concluded that London was failing to take the steps needed to persuade foreign banks to stay in the city.

"London's relative advantage as a financial capital is diminishing rapidly, benefiting Paris and Frankfurt," said Jacqueline Gimenez, chief economist at the LCC.

"London as a city needs to address its own internal weakness immediately, if its absolute

advantage is not also to be threatened," she said.

Firms are undecided about London's role in the expansion of financial markets and European integration. This, combined with infrastructure weakness, is pushing new investment and existing operations to Frankfurt, Paris and New York, the LCC said.

Of the 478 foreign banking institutions with operations in London, 109 responded to the survey.

Eighty-two per cent of respondents said London needed to address its internal problems, particularly transport, working and living standards. High operating costs were seen as a major reason for transfer of investment away from the city.

Intel faces difficulties

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Intel Corp's shares took a severe beating recently after the company announced its seemingly recession-proof business was encountering a slump.

Intel's stock lost \$6.75 in a day after it said that its profit and revenues were under pressure in the third quarter ending Sept. 28.

The Mootain View, California-based company, the dominant force in the computer chip field, is the latest victim in an industry hit by price slashing, layoffs and falling profits.

In recent months, shares of such giants as Apple Computer Inc., International Business Machines Corp. and Compaq Computer Corp. have fallen after the companies admitted to facing difficulties.

The computer makers have been slashing prices on their pro-

ducts to entice customers, while laying off thousands of employees to pare costs.

Intel, which provides the chips or "brains" that run most IBM-compatible personal computers, said weakening demand for computers and price competition was finally beginning to hurt.

The company said it would not be able to meet the dollar-a-share profit forecast by Wall Street analysts, but would still come in better than the 83 cents a share earned a year ago. In the second quarter, it earned \$1.10 a share, or \$230.8 million.

"The combination of seasonal weakness, a sluggish economy and a computer industry in rapid transition has produced poor results (in the industry)," Intel President Andrew Grove said in a statement.

Abu Dhabi keeps bankers guessing over BCCI rescue

ABU DHABI (Agencies) — The government of Abu Dhabi, majority holders in the scandal-hit Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), is keeping bankers guessing on its plan to rescue the group's operations in a number of countries.

"They have to restart the bank's operations at least here (United Arab Emirates) and Britain for reasons of prestige," a senior banker based in Dubai said.

Banking sources in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) believe the rescue or relaunch plan involves smaller, leaner overseas operations with a new management team and an injection of \$4 to \$5 billion.

Abu Dhabi authorities started their own investigations earlier this month on fraud allegations which prompted the worldwide closure of the bank on July 5. About 15 senior BCCI officials are still in custody for questioning.

A committee including senior Abu Dhabi finance, banking, oil officials and directors of Abu Dhabi ruler, Sheikh Zaid Bin Sultan Al Nahayan's department of Personal Affairs, are considering the future involvement of the emirate in BCCI, banking sources said.

They added that the international auditing and consultancy firm Ernst and Young also had a mandate to prepare a report on a possible relaunch of the bank, 77.4 per cent owned by the Abu Dhabi government.

The sources said the report was to be prepared by Sunday but Abu Dhabi officials remained silent on any future prospects of BCCI.

A British court had ordered BCCI shareholders to prepare a rescue plan by Dec. 2.

"The (rescue) plan is said to involve keeping BCCI operations alive in eight to nine countries," a UAE-based banker said.

The London-based Arabic-language newspaper Al Hayat reported Saturday that Sheikh Zaid had pledged a \$150 million loan to help BCCI's Egypt operations.

Sheikh Zaid, who is also the president of the UAE, is currently on an official visit to Egypt. Bankers said BCCI might be relaunched in Egypt, the UAE, Pakistan, Britain, and possibly in a few more countries in Europe and the Middle East.

Before the July 5 closure, BCCI had more than 350 branches and offices in 67 countries, from North and South American

to Asia and Africa.

"United States will be out, South America will be out, Africa will be out, a banker close to BCCI said.

The relaunch plan is also said to rely on the acceptance of depositors to keep funds with the bank up to five years and to settle for lower interest rates.

An affiliate of BCCI in the UAE, recently renamed Union National Bank (UNB) is operating and BCCI's 40 per cent share will be purchased soon by Abu Dhabi interests, sources close to BCCI said.

However, they said it was highly unlikely that BCCI's eight branches in the UAE would be incorporated in UNB.

UNB is negotiating with the government of Pakistan to take over BCCI's operations in that country.

Bankers in the UAE said most of the top executives of BCCI, in custody since last Sunday, may have to break their ties with the bank.

Sources close to BCCI said they expected the official, who include former acting president Swaleh Naqvi, to be freed soon. Mr. Naqvi, a British citizen, has been indicted in the United

States on money laundering charges but there is no U.S.-UAE extradition treaty.

Meanwhile, London's Financial Times reported Monday that BCCI officials defrauded Nigeria of up to \$200 million from 1985 to 1987.

The newspaper quoted officials of the scandal-ridden bank as saying London BCCI executives coordinated fraudulently with colleagues working for BCCI-Nigeria under a management contract.

The Times said the officials estimated the bank made an illegal profit of \$150 million to \$200 million between 1985 and 1987, but that the frauds were probably in operation beginning in 1982.

BCCI officials said that in one of the frauds a secret account was operated within BCCI-Nigeria under the exclusive control of the expatriate management and directed by London executives, the newspaper said.

The managers fed a substantial portion of local currency profits made by BCCI-Nigeria into the secret account, then diverted the money to London via customer's accounts, the Financial Times quoted the officials as saying.

Christie's profit sinks 92%

LONDON (AP) — Christie's International PLC said Monday its after-tax profit sank 92 per cent in the first half of the year as economic uncertainty and the Gulf war depressed sales of impressionist and contemporary paintings.

Christie's said its after-tax profit for the six months ended June 30 came to £1.841 million (\$3.33 million) compared with £23.9 million (\$43.3 million) in the same period a year earlier.

Christie's said its pre-tax profit sank 93 per cent to £3 million (\$5.4 million) from £40.1 million (\$72.6 million).

Revenue fell 52 per cent to £50.2 million (\$90.9 million) from £105.2 million (\$190 million).

Christie's chairman, Lord Carrington, said "the traditional areas of the art market help up well," resulting in some "outstanding sales in silver, mid master pictures and drawings, jewelry and continental furniture."

Report accuses U.S. bank insurance fund of lavish spending

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. agencies in charge of bailing out the savings and loan industry and insuring bank deposits are in danger of running out of money but they are still spending lavishly on office furniture, art work — and even cookbooks — a congressional report said Sunday.

The report by a House of Representatives Banking Subcommittee accused the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) and the Resolution Trust Corp. (RTC) of extravagant and unnecessary spending.

The report said the FDIC spent more than \$177,000 on art work for a new office complex in Arlington, Virginia. That included framed works costing as much as \$2,755, it said.

The FDIC has also spent lavishly on office furniture, the report said. The San Francisco office bought a desk for \$1,362, a credenza for \$1,126, bookcases for \$410 and four chairs for \$510 each, it said.

Among the items found by the subcommittee staff was an invoice for 3,000 copies of Asian cookbooks for \$7,364. The FDIC bought 2,400 coffee mugs for \$6,210.

The FDIC, which insures bank deposits up to \$100,000, is expected to run out of money next year unless Congress approves a \$70 billion line of credit.

The RTC, in charge of closing and selling the assets of failed savings and loan companies, expects to run out of money before the end of the year and has asked Congress for an additional \$80 billion to cover losses from the bailout programme on top of \$80 billion already approved.

EC finances wheat exports to Albania

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Commission has approved a scheme to enable Hungary to export wheat to Albania, a commission spokesman has said.

The so-called Triangular Arrangement, with the EC helping one former East Bloc country to export to another, is the first of its kind in the region.

"The commission has agreed with the Hungarian authorities five million European Currency Units to allow the sale of 45,000 tonnes of Hungarian breadmaking wheat to Albania," the spokesman said. The financing is worth \$5.9 million.

The wheat would be delivered by rail. Albania's transport system is already used at near-full capacity to deliver other EC food aid, he said.

Triangular Arrangements are a

device the European Community (EC) and other aid agencies use in Third World programmes to channel food from countries that have surpluses to others in need.

Poland originally suggested the EC back such deals to help the reforming countries of east and central Europe. It wanted to export food to the Soviet Union with the EC help, but EC ministers resisted the idea despite the commission's enthusiasm.

The commission pressed ahead with the Hungarian credit as a contribution under the Group of 24 (G-24) industrialised countries' campaign to support the former communist economies trying to switch to market-oriented systems.

Albania has not yet been admitted to the G-24 programme, but it is not barred from receiving

wheat from Hungary.

The commission has already agreed to send Albania 50,000 tonnes of EC wheat, and is poised to double that depending on the country's needs, EC sources said.

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Yugoslav jet shot down; heavy fighting continues in Osijek

ZAGREB, Yugoslavia (Agencies) — A Yugoslav Air Force plane was reported shot down Monday near the Hungarian border, as fighting raged for the third straight day in the besieged eastern Croatian city of Osijek.

Hungarian defence officials in Budapest said three Yugoslav jets crossed into Hungarian air space Monday morning and that bombing was reported along the border.

The federal army has often aided Serbs in the ongoing Croat-Serb fighting.

The official Yugoslav News Agency (Tanjug) quoting sources close to the air force command, said a jet was shot down by a ground-to-air missile near Dinji Miholjac on the border with Hungary, some 400 kilometres north-west of Belgrade.

Tanjung said it was not clear whether the plane was shot from the Croatian or Hungarian side.

Hungarian Defence Ministry spokesman Col. Gyorgy Keleti said the Hungarian Air Force had not downed a jet.

Col. Keleti said there was intensive air activity along the Yugoslav-Hungarian border.

He said three Yugoslav Air Force jets crossed into Hungarian air space Monday morning, and that they fired two air-to-ground rockets at Yugoslav targets. It was not immediately clear what was hit.

The escalating violence came as the European Community's (EC) mediator, Lord Carrington, travelled to Yugoslavia for a

meeting with Croatian and Serbian leaders to try to secure a ceasefire.

The longstanding Serb-Croat ethnic rivalry was exacerbated when the Republic of Croatia declared independence in June. Ethnic Serbs living in the republic say they fear discrimination in an independent Croatia. Serb guerrillas have taken control of about a third of Croatia.

Croatia accuses Serbia, the largest of Yugoslavia's six republics, of instigating the fighting in an attempt to expand its territory.

Tensions between the Croats and ethnic Serbs — who make up 12 per cent of Croatia's 4.7 million people — are fanned by memories of the World War II slaughter of Serbs by a Nazi puppet regime in Croatia.

The fighting has left more than 400 people dead since late June. Clashes escalated over the weekend after Croatian blocked federal army garrisons, halting food supplies and cutting off electricity. Federal troops responded by pounding Croatian positions with tanks, troops and planes. At least 26 people died in Croatia in a 24-hour period ending Sunday night.

Croatian media and defence officials reported fighting Monday throughout the republic.

Croatian media and the republic's Defence Ministry said one nurse was killed and parts of Osijek's general hospital were destroyed in overnight artillery attacks by federal troops.

A federal military statement

carried by Tanjug said Croatian troops mounted an all-night attack on the federal barracks in Osijek to try to force a surrender.

An infantry attack on the barracks near the city centre was preceded by a mortar barrage and was repulsed, said the statement, adding that several of the shells had struck the nearby hospital and residential buildings near the barracks.

A Croatian defence spokesman said he had no information on possible injuries. Hospital patients had been moved to bomb shelters earlier. Croatian radio reported that several parts of the hospital were still burning.

Elsewhere in Osijek, about 10 fires burned out of control, media and Defence Ministry reported, and air raid warnings sounded.

Fighting was also reported in Vukovar, south of the Hungarian border. The federal military statement said troops had beaten off a Croat attack on the garrison in Vukovar, a city on the Danube River boundary with Serbia.

Tanjung reported there had been a partial mobilisation of territorial defence troops in Vukovar, the Serbian northern province bordering Croatia. It said parts of eight wartime units had been called up.

Croat forces — after weeks of setbacks in fighting with federal troops and rebellious Serbs living in their territory — claimed Sunday to have captured hundreds of federal soldiers and a large cache of arms, including anti-tank weapons.

In Amsterdam, Dutch Foreign Minister Hans Van Den Broek has called for a meeting of the Western European Union (WEU) to consider sending an armed peacekeeping force to Yugoslavia, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Monday.

"We have asked the German presidency of the WEU to convene a meeting shortly in order to discuss the desirability and feasibility of despatching a WEU peacekeeping force to Yugoslavia," the spokesman told Reuters.

The Netherlands currently holds the rotating presidency of the EC.

Meanwhile, Britain and Greece Monday agreed that nothing would be gained from recognising individual Yugoslav republics which have declared themselves independent, a British government official said.

He said British Prime Minister John Major and visiting Greek Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis agreed in talks that there were "no advantages and indeed signs of danger in recognising individual republics."

There have been differing approaches on the issue within the European Community, which is trying to act as a peacemaker in the fighting between Yugoslav republics. Croatia and Slovenia have declared their independence.

The two prime ministers agreed they would continue to support the EC peace initiative headed by Lord Carrington.

Carlsson quits after suffering biggest poll defeat

STOCKHOLM (R) — Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson resigned Monday after his long-ruling Social Democrats lost an election that swung Sweden to the right.

Formation of a new government was clouded by division within the victorious centre-right coalition, which topped Mr. Carlsson's party but failed to win a parliamentary majority in the ballot Sunday.

Carlsson, 56, a party stalwart who replaced the assassinated Olof Palme in 1986, handed in his resignation at 0900 GMT to parliamentary Speaker Thage Peterson after the Social Democratic Party suffered its biggest election defeat since the 1920s.

"I have asked to be dismissed and my request was granted," Mr. Carlsson told reporters in a curt statement outside the speaker's office in the parliamentary building by Stockholm's medieval old town.

"He asked me to remain as head of a caretaker cabinet, and I naturally accepted," Mr. Carlsson added, declining to make any further comments.

A centre-right coalition — led by the Conservatives and also including the Liberals, the Centre Party and the Christian Democrats — won 47.1 per cent of the vote. The Social Democrats and its allied Leftist Party received 42.7 per cent.

The populist New Democracy Party led by eccentric businessman Count Jan Wachtmeister took 6.8 per cent of the vote — and the balance of power.

Finance Minister Allan Larsson said the election result was likely to hurt the Swedish economy's chances of recovering from zero growth and rising unemployment.

"We will now get political instability and uncertainty and that will damage the country," he said.

Mr. Peterson said he would now hold talks with all the party leaders. A new government could take office next month at the earliest after the legislature reconvenes on Oct. 1.

Manila Senate formally rejects U.S. bases pact

MANILA (R) — The Philippine Senate Monday formally rejected a new U.S. military bases treaty on a third and final vote, forcing Washington to begin withdrawing 8,000 servicemen from its former colony.

The United States is likely to be given a year to withdraw, handing back Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Station, previously the two largest U.S. military bases in Asia.

President Corason Aquino, fighting to keep U.S. troops in the country, has said she wants to hold a referendum to overturn the Senate vote. The referendum could be held in December.

Only eight votes in the 23-member Senate were needed to kill the accord, which had to be passed with a two-thirds majority.

Casting the decisive vote, Senator Aquilino Pimentel branded the pact "a monstrous treaty that preserves the master and servant relationship between the United States and our country."

He called his vote "the last critical nail that needs to be driven into the coffin of the treaty so that we may entomb it with such a degree of finality that it will never rear its ugly head ever again in this land."

The U.S. embassy in a statement welcomed Mrs. Aquino's plan to put the treaty to a national vote.

"We admire her determination and warmly reciprocate her support for the friendship between our two countries," the embassy said.

"We stand fully behind the president in her continuing effort to put in place the new treaty," the embassy statement said.

A U.S. official source who asked not to be identified said Mrs. Aquino could invoke a previous agreement giving the United States up to a year to withdraw its forces.

"It's entirely possible that the Philippine government will invoke it and allow us that other year, in which case we are covered legally and the status of our military personnel remains the same," said the source.

"It is an historic vote. I think this is a moment of truth," said former defence minister, Senator Juan Ponce Enrile.

"We are slaying an age-old problem which has divided our nation," Mr. Enrile told reporters.



Thieves use sleeping gas to prey on passengers

NICE, France (R) — Thieves used sleeping gas to prey on railway passengers travelling to southern France this weekend, police said Monday. They said at least half a dozen French and foreign passengers bound for this French Mediterranean resort on separate trains from Geneva, Rome and Lourdes, complained their possessions were stolen. The robbers operated in southern France and northern Italy, often using sleeping gas to ensure they worked undisturbed, police said. They then disembarked at midway stations before their victims awoke. French Railway police say they registered 2,000 such robberies in 1990.

Australia uncovers visa racket

CANBERRA (R) — Australia has uncovered a racket at its high commission in Malaysia in which visas were given to prostitutes, officials said Monday. A Malaysian-based syndicate had corrupted two locally hired staff at the high commission in Kuala Lumpur to issue visitor visas to women who would travel to Australia to work in brothels, an immigration department spokesman said. "Before it was realised what was going on the two staff had issued a total of 117 visitor visas to these women over the last financial year," he told Reuters. "It came to light mainly because of the large number of women observed coming in on particular visas and somebody became suspicious," the spokesman added. The two Malaysians who had issued the visas were sacked and procedures for granting visas had been tightened up, although these have not been made public, according to the spokesman.

New Kids On The Block — Highest Paid U.S. entertainers

NEW YORK (R) — No, the highest paid U.S. entertainer is not Michael Jackson. It's not Bill Cosby. It's not even Madonna. Knocking the perennials off the top of Forbes magazine's list this year is pop music group New Kids On The Block, who will make an estimated \$115 million in 1990 and 1991, according to the Sept. 30 issue released Sunday. The five teenage heart-throbs earned their money from sales of almost \$75 million in concert tickets and profits from the sale of more than \$1 billion in merchandise in 1990 alone, Forbes, a bi-weekly business magazine, said. The group made its first appearance on Forbes' annual "top 40" list of the highest paid entertainers only a year ago. Slipping from the top to the number two slot was Bill Cosby, the 54-year-old actor and comedian who began his career long before the New Kids were born. Cosby, thanks in large part to syndicated reruns of The Cosby Show, will earn about \$113 million in 1990 and 1991. Talk show host Oprah Winfrey, who has built her own production company, ranked third by earning an estimated \$80 million this year and last. Pop singer Madonna danced into fourth place, with about \$63 million, while Michael Jackson, last year's number two, placed fifth with about \$60 million. For those hoping one day to nab a spot on the Forbes list, the magazine offered a clue to success — 18 of the 40 made their fortunes in the music business.

Beatles music inspired by drugs, — McCartney says

HAMBURG, Germany (R) — Former Beatle Paul McCartney said in an interview published Sunday that much of the rock group's later music was inspired by drugs. "From 'Rubber Soul' in 1965 on, every Beatles album was produced under the influence of drugs, especially marijuana and LSD," McCartney told the German news magazine Der Spiegel. "Everything in the sixties was drug-inspired — music, literature, cinema. The Vietnam War was carried out under drugs," he said in the interview conducted in London. Asked if he had been an alcoholic and drug addict, he said newspaper stories that he was a "boozie and heroin zombie" were an exaggeration. "I smoked heroin one single time. It's a wonder I didn't succumb (to addiction)," he said. But McCartney said he was not involved in drink and other drugs that "I nearly perished. Who thinks about eating when there's LSD?" After the Beatles broke up in 1969, McCartney formed his own band and is still recording, touring and writing songs.

U.S. democratic candidates focus on domestic issues

DES MOINES, Iowa (R) — Democrats seeking to challenge President George Bush for the White House in 1992 have put domestic issues, ranging from the economy to civil rights, at the forefront of their young but expanding campaign.

With the season of primary elections less than five months away, the field of officially declared Democratic presidential hopefuls grew to three with the entry Sunday of Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa.

As many as four others may join the race in the next few weeks.

Presidential primary elections are held to choose a party's candidate in the general ballot in November 1992.

Sen. Harkin, along with Virginia Governor Douglas Wilder, who jumped in last week, and former Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas, who declared six months ago, are focusing their attack mainly on Mr. Bush's domestic policy in the early going.

Declaring his candidacy at a barbeque in Iowa, Sen. Harkin unleashed a strong attack on the economic policies of Mr. Bush and his predecessor, Ronald Reagan.

He depicted the Republican Party and Mr. Bush as protectors of privilege and greed for those who climbed the economic ladder and then pulled it up after them.

De Klerk calls on ANC to disband military wing

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — President F.W. de Klerk is calling on the African National Congress to disband its military wing under a new peace pact seeking an end to black factional violence. Three more people were fatally stabbed overnight.

Mr. De Klerk said it is time for the ANC, the main black opposition group, to become a purely political party. In a TV interview Sunday night, he said the ANC military wing was not "in the spirit" of the peace accord signed by black and white leaders.

The military wing of Nelson Mandela's ANC has suspended its attacks since a ceasefire was worked out with the government

last year, but trains and maintains armed formations. There are no reliable figures on its strength or capabilities.

Mr. Mandela told the weekend peace conference at which the new peace pact was signed that the ANC military wing, known as Spear Of The Nation, would not be disbanded.

Police said Monday that three people were killed overnight in Johannesburg's black townships. Two black men were stabbed to death in Alexandra and another was stabbed to death in Tokoza, they said.

Bangladeshis give landslide verdict for parliamentary system

DHAKA (R) — Bangladesh buried 16 years of presidential rule Monday when returns in a national referendum showed a landslide verdict in favour of changing to a parliamentary form of government.

"We are off to a good start. Democracy now takes a firm institutional shape," said Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia after hearing the latest results of Sunday's vote.

Returns from 22,963 out of 24,309 polling centres showed 17.46 million voters had approved a change to parliamentary democracy after 16 years of presidential rule interspersed with military dictatorship. The vote against was 3.18 million.

Sheikh Hasina, head of the opposition Awami League Party and Mrs. Khaleda's arch-rival, congratulated people for voting in favour of the change.

"We have banished autocracy and military dictatorship. It's a great victory of the people," she said in a statement.

Election officials said nearly 40 per cent of a total of 62.3 million eligible voters defied rain and widespread flooding to vote.

Parliament approved a constitutional amendment last month to restore parliamentary democracy, but the constitution required the president to hold a referendum before giving his assent.

Thousands of people queued in knee-deep water outside polling centres in Dhaka to vote after a three-hour downpour.

Officials said they set up polling centres on boats in the 21 districts in the north of the country, where floods have killed at least 100 people over the past four days and washed away thousands of homes.

Voting was peaceful, although three election officials in Chittagil town in Noakhali district were arrested and accused of casting false ballots.

The right-wing Freedom Party,

which had asked voters to reject the change, alleged widespread rigging in the referendum.

Law Minister Mirza Golan Hafez said Acting President Shahabuddin Ahmad would give his assent to the constitutional amendment after the referendum results were officially announced Tuesday.

A date for electing a president, who will henceforth be a titular head of state, would be announced within five days.

After the constitutional amendment comes into force the prime minister will become the country's chief executive. The president will act according to his or her advice.

The prime minister is chosen by elected members of parliament and will rule with the help of a cabinet — a return to the British-style system which Bangladesh embraced in November, 1972, a year after it broke away from Pakistan to become an independent country.

Seoul opposition launches new party

SEOUL (R) — A coalition of South Korea's two main opposition groups formally launched a new party Monday, pledging to work for democracy and reunification of the divided Korean peninsula.

The Democratic Party (DP) was formed after last week's merger of the party of long-time opposition leader Kim Doo-jung and a rival political group led by Lee Ki-tack, the new party was legally registered Monday.

The DP said it would become a reformist party striving to achieve "democracy and reunification of our fatherland."

The new party, to be led by Mr. Kim and Mr. Lee, said it hoped to reduce the gap between rich and poor and to work against corruption.

The formation of the DP is the first substantial alliance of South Korea's splintered forces since 1987 when the government announced sweeping political reforms including direct presidential

fought hit-and-run battles with thousands of students during anti-American demonstrators in southwest South Korea, Yonhap News Agency said Monday.

The violence erupted in Kwangju after students took to the streets at the end of a huge campus rally calling for the withdrawal of U.S. forces based in South Korea, witnesses said.

Clashes erupted in the heart of the city as students armed with petrol bombs and stones fought police firing teargas, Yonhap said.

At least 20 riot police and 20 students were injured. One student, Yoon Min-Ho, 20, required brain surgery after being hit on the head with a stone hurled by riot police, Yonhap said.

About 5,000 students from about 60 universities in the southern provinces had gathered at Kwangju's Chosun University for the rally.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Former east German spy master arrested

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — Former east German spy master Markus Wolf Sunday was placed under house arrest. Vienna and faces expulsion, the Interior Ministry reported Monday. Mr. Wolf, who was detained for questioning Sunday, asked for political asylum, but is likely to be deported, a spokesman told the Associated Press. "His request for asylum takes a minimum of two weeks," said the spokesman, who asked for anonymity. He said this meant the former head of east German intelligence cannot be expelled immediately.

China awards Andreotti honorary degree

PEKING (R) — A Chinese university gave visiting Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti an honorary law degree Monday, the first Western leader to receive such an award since Peking's crackdown on dissent in June, 1989. The Italian leader's six-day visit is the latest sign Peking is emerging from the diplomatic isolation imposed by the West after China crushed the pro-democracy demonstrations, killing hundreds. "He has made great contributions in ceaselessly working of the strengthening and development of friendly relations between China and Italy," Peking University President Wu Shuqing said. "Mr. Andreotti is China's good friend." Mr. Wu said. Mr. Andreotti referred obliquely to human rights in a short speech. "The world is looking for new roads for universal peace and justice among the people. This is a difficult aim to achieve, but it's possible to achieve it. The young people have a deep attachment to freedom and they have also the will to see that their rights are respected while observing their own duties," he said.

Gorbachev's envoy in South Korea

SEOUL (R) — An envoy from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev arrived in Seoul Monday to discuss aid and ways of expanding ties following last month's failed Soviet coup, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. Vadim Medvedev, a senior adviser to Mr. Gorbachev, is due to meet President Roh Tae-Woo to deliver a message expressing thanks for South Korea's support during the coup attempt. Critics of the South Korean government have pointed out however that Seoul was slow to condemn the coup. Mr. Medvedev, the first senior official from Kremlin to visit Seoul since the coup, is also due to meet business leaders during his five-day stay.

Polish freighter capsizes

CABO ORTEGAL, Spain (AP) — A Polish freighter has capsized in a collision with a South Korean container ship 96 kilometres of Spain's most northeastern Galician port, an officer said. Luis Burgos, assistant rescue coordinator in the Spanish Merchant Marine, said there were no injuries and no oil spillage. All 19 sailors on the Kosciuszko were rescued by the other ship, identified as Hanjin Singapore, although four of the Polish crew members remained in the water near the ship waiting for the towboat.

Rebels kill up to 30 Burmese troops

MAE SOT, Thailand (R) — Karen guerrillas killed up to 30 Burmese soldiers by firing mortars at their boats as they travelled downriver near the Thai frontier, Thai border police said. The attack Friday brought to about 100 the combined death toll in a week of fighting between government troops and guerrillas on the Thai-Burmese border, an officer in this Thai frontier town said Sunday. The officer said the Karen opened fire and sank the three Burmese boats on the Salween River, just north of the guerrillas' headquarters at Maserplaw. The boats were carrying reinforcements to skirmishes about eight kilometres north of the base, on the bank of the adjoining Moei River facing Thailand.

Dhaka blames Indian dam for floods

RAJSHAH, Bangladesh (R) — Paramilitary guards and volunteers struggling to repair beaches to an embankment in flood-stricken north Bangladesh have pinned blame for much of the disaster on India's Farakka Dam. "I don't say Farakka is the only reason behind recurring floods, but I must say it is one of the main reasons," said Mohammad Saifuzzaman, deputy commissioner of Rajshahi, one of the worst-hit districts. He said flooding started in Bangladesh after India opened sluice gates at Farakka, 80 kilometres from Rajshahi, to release floodwaters in West Bengal state. "This suddenly raised the water level in the Padma, Mahananda and several other rivers which burst their banks, sending hundreds of villages under water," he said Monday. "The rains only added to the disaster and increased its fury." The Farakka Dam regulates the flow of the Ganges River. Successive Bangladesh governments have complained that Farakka causes navigation and irrigation problems by withholding much of the Ganges water during the dry season, and aggravates flooding in the monsoon season by releasing excess water.

Mongolia Communists call early congress

PEKING (R) — Mongolia's beleaguered Communist Party, buffeted by democratic reforms at home and the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union, has called a national congress for December and will probably change its name and top officials. In a dispatch from Ulan Bator, the New China News Agency said the 21st national congress would be held from Dec. 25 to 27 "ahead of schedule to discuss overall reforms in the country in response to dramatic changes taking place at home and abroad." The decision to hold the congress, less than a year after the 20th congress convened in February, was made Saturday night "in the wake of a new domestic and international situation as well as pressure coming from inside and outside the party," the agency said.

Problem solved on ozone satellite

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (R) — Full contact was established Monday with a \$740 million environmental research satellite deployed by the U.S. space shuttle Discovery to study the Earth's diminishing ozone layer. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) said engineers working around the clock solved a transmitter problem which had plagued the satellite since it was released by Discovery Sunday. "With that, the UARS (upper atmosphere research satellite) is in perfect health and in really fabulous shape," flight director Al Pennington said at mission control in Texas. The satellite will conduct the first detailed study of pollution's effect on the upper atmosphere, especially the shrinking layer of ozone that shields life from deadly ultraviolet radiation.

U.K. ruling party buoyed by new polls

LONDON (R) — British government ministers said Sunday there was no need to rush into an early general election although they were encouraged by two new opinion polls showing the ruling Conservatives ahead of the opposition. Falling inflation and interest rates, signs that Britain's year-long economic recession may be ending, and a run of polls putting the Conservatives ahead of the Labour Party have fed media speculation about a November election. An election must be held by next July. A poll by the Harris Institute for Sunday's Observer newspaper gave the Conservatives a five-point lead, their biggest since April, at 43 per cent to 38 per cent for Labour. A survey by ICM for the Sunday Express gave the Conservatives 41 per cent to 37 per cent for Labour, whose support slumped six points from last month. Five consecutive opinion surveys have now shown a Conservative lead.